MIRAGE

No. 5



"Voux Qui Faites L'Endormie—"

CONCERNING THAT COVER....

Enclosed is the cover; might be subtitled "The Further Adventures of Chaliapin," since it illustrates another Faustian scene. However, this one is from the Gounod rather than last time's Boito version.

This illustration is a montage of sorts, depicting Mephistofeles as he sings the mocking, ironic seranade outside Margeurite's window, and Margeurite herself as she might have appeared as the first dawning of the meaning of the song's words came upon her... "Vous qui faites l'endormie, n'entendez-vous pas...." Mephistopheles mocks Margeurite in this serenade, which is sung to "Catarina" and in which he tells her that while she may pretend sleep, all the while knowing that her lover is about to join her in bed; 'tis best she remember to "bar the doors like any miser till upon thy hand is a wedding ring," knowing that due to her seduction by Faust, she is now pregnant.

While Chaliapin excelled particularly in roles of a Satanic or demonic nature, of which this opera "Faust" was one of the most famous, he never really cared for the composer's handling of the work, compared to the conception of Goethe, whose literary work inspired the opera. Gounod's opera gives Mephistopheles the appearance of a worldly playboy out on a holiday, causing the downfalls of Margeurite and Faust and the death of Valentin as more of a lark, or a diversion to one sated on common pleasures. He much preferred the universally evil aspect of the Boito composition, in which the overpowering and omnipotent malevolence of Satan is so much more greatly depicted and defined than in Gounod.

Chaliapin's characterizations were literally drawn from life; he was a constant student of people, as much as any artist. (He was an artist in at least 2 categories: his striking use of makeup, and his soulpture). When in his first appearances in this country he was often criticised for some of the mannerisms and broad strokes with which he drew certain characters, in particular the "Don Basilio" in Rossini's THE BARBER OF SEVILLE. (One critic howled about the large red handkerchief he used rather noisily, but it remained a near-standard prop with many interpeters of the role) he retorted vehemently "But I KNOW the man! He is as real as you or I!" Chaliapin's early years were spent among the serfs in Russia; he worked as one of the barge-haulers on the Volga; he went through the madness and terror of the Revolution and the groping infancy of the new Soviet Republic. Chaliapin was a man of the people, and his studies of them formed the basis of most of his outstanding conceptions of makeup.

Of all his magnificent conceptions, it is doubtful, however, that he will be remembered for any but his powerful and awe-inspiring personifications of Satan, as depicted in "Faust" and Boito's "Mephistophele" (see cover & commentary for MIRAGE #4).

If any of you have and would be willing to part with any 78 RPM recordings of this great artist, please by all means contact me. /letters to MIRAGE will be forewarded gladly/.

MIRAGE #5, Spring, 1962, is published not more than 4 times, nor less than 2 times, the year by The Anthem Press. Editorial offices: 5111 Liberty Heights Avenue, Baltimore 7, Maryland. MIRAGE is available through trade, contribution, or on a subscription basis only. Sample copies: 25¢; 4 issues for $1.00, in the U.S. and Canada. First class rates are double the above. In Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations (except Canada): sample copy: 2 shillings; 4 issues for 8 shillings, to Alan Dodd, authorized British agent, at 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts., England. Other countries: 4 issues for $1.25 via International Money Order only payable in U.S. Currency, or U.S. Currency itself. The editor and publishers assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, nor for any statements or opinions in this magazine not expressly credited to them. Persons submitting letters of comment for "Hindsight!" assume full responsibility for their statements. Mimeographed in U.S.A. by D.C.Studebaker, Lookinglassland Press, 7444, 83rd Place Palmer Park, Hyattsville Maryland.

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MIRAGE

No. 5

Summer, 1962

"The Amateur Magazine of Fantasy"

VOLUME ONE

NUMBER FIVE

JACK L. CHALKER, editor

I do not know if it ever existed—
That lost world floating dimly on Time's stream—
And yet I see it often, violet-misted,
And shimmering at the back of some vague dream.
There were strange towers and curious lapping rivers,
Labyrinths of wonder, and low vaults of light,
And bough-crossed skies of flame, like that which quivers
Wistfully, just before a winter's night.

Great moors led off to sedgy shores unpeopled,
Where vast birds wheeled, while on a windswept hill
There was a village, ancient and white-steepled,
With evening chimes for which I listen still.
I do not know what land it is—or dare
Ask when or why I was, or will be, there.

.....H.P.Lovecraft*

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MARCH '61

interiors by Prosser, Douthwaite, and Jeeves

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OVER THE EDGE



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JACK L. CHALKER

UNLESS YOU HAPPEN TO BE ONE OF those readers who turns immediately to the editorials and lettercolumns, or maybe you are a member of the Hatecraft school, you have glanced through the issue already, and have seen a slight change -- for the better, we hope -- in the layout this issue. The main reason is that we finally got up the energy to rig up a home mimeoscope of sorts, thus being able, although amateurishly, to present some slight artwork as well. Know ye, however, that artwork will not abound in future issues -- it will be used sparingly, and only when it will actually benefit a piece.... We wish to welcome to our art department promising young British fantasy artist Harry Warren Douthwaite. Harry is certainly a master of the intricate background, as his supurb illo for John Pesta's MOTHER OF DARKNESS this issue illustrates.... We wish to announce that the second Anthem Press Chapbook will be appearing shortly -- David H. Keller's A FIGMENT OF A DREAM. It is by far Dr. Keller's best piece of involved fantasy; undisputedly one of his finest works as a whole. This novelette has never been published before in any form whatsoever, and this will be a first, limited and numbered, edition. It will run over 40 pages, and will contain several excellent illustrations by Dave Prosser. Heavy paper covers; justified margins. A true collector's item! Because of its small edition and the expense of electronic stencils, we must ask $2.00 for it, although it will undoubtedly be worth many times this not too long from now.

WE WENT TO THE LUNACON last April 29, and it turned out to be a real blast. Although neither MIRAGE or myself indulge very much in con reports, I am going to present a chronicle of this con -- primarily because I was on the program.

Many of the smaller but important East Coast conventions suffer from a lack of publicity outside their local spheres. The Lunacon is one such, and there has been very little mention of it. This is hereby rectified.

Ordinarily I wouldn't've tried to make a con far enough away as to make expenses run high but I had set my sights on this year's unusually star-studded Lunacon, which was to be held in Adelphi Hall, 5th Avenue, in New York City.

I didn't have the money to get all the way to New York, and train and bus schedules were such that either would have landed me in that city with no money and no place to go in the wee small hours of the morning. So, I made arrangements with Philly's Harriet Kolchak, who must certain rank as the Queen of Convention Fans, to stay over at her place Saturday night, and get a ride up with someone from Philadelphia on Sunday morn.... Being the nostalgic sort who walks two miles to ride the near-extinct streetcars, and who desperately mourned the loss of this country's last overnight steamship line, the Old Bay Line, I decided to take the train. A habitual Trailways user for trip it'd been 10 years since I'd even been in a train station.

After a harrowing time getting to the Baltimore station, since it was off the main bus lines, I finally purchased by ticket (cheap bargain rate, good for 48 hours only) and boarded the train. The Afternoon Congressional sped me to Philly in short order, although not short enough to keep this poor innocent traveller from ordering a hamburger in the dining car and wind up with a bill for $2.00 -- just for the hamburger! Feeling rather sick, check stub in my hand, I wandered dizzily and much broker back to my seat. I arrived at Harriet's about 6:30 P.M., and knocked loudly. Nobody answered. Friendly neighbors told me that she had gone out, probably to the Sun Ray restaurant around the corner. I went around there, and, while I found no Harriet Kolchak, I did find a reason

ably priced meal, much more filling than the meager -- but oh so expensive! -- hamburger of two hours before, and I ate supper. Walking back to Harriet's, I found her nearby, hunting for me. She hadn't expected me for a couple hours as yet, and had eaten -- in the restaurant across the street from the Sun Ray! Ah, well.... Steve Kolchak works nights, I found, and had been asleep when I knocked.

Finally I got settled. About this time Steve Kolchak arose, finding that he had to work that night, and came down to eat before leaving. At this time, the three of us -- Steve Harriet, and myself -- discussed a variety of things, much having to do with SF and fantasy. Later I was to see much of the Kolchak collection -- rare and wonderful old magazines, books, and fanzines I'd give my eye teeth for. After Steve left, Harriet and I discussed several things while going through some magazines; primarily, however, the topic was Derleth's Lovecraftian tales. I also watched an hour's TV -- THE DEFENDERS, a show I had not previously seen, due to my working Saturday nights. This turned out to be a controversial one, which many stations had refused to carry; a superb treatment of the case for legalized abortion. Baltimore, I later learned, had censored it, much in the same way as they'd censored the controversial Fabian episode of BUS STOP, although I caught the latter on a Washington channel.

After the show, we went back up to look over Harriet's assorted fanzine stacks. In the midst of this, the doorbell rang. I went down and opened the door. There, in Bermuda Shorts, looking like bearded Satan on a Roman Holliday, stood Don Studebaker, the printer of MIRAGE and other Anthem publications for me. Don had hitch-hiked from his home town of Palmer Park, Maryland, a suburb of Washington.

More talk, more planning for the next day's festivities, and then I went to bed. Sleep proved elusive, however, since Don was discussing in a loud voice an SF operetta he was working on. It sounded from his description like a musical TEENAGE CAVEMAN, and I said so. This stopped the talking, and I drifted off to sleep around 3 A.M.

Rudely awakened by the alarm clock at 7 A.M., I sleepily arose and made ready to go to the con. Our pickup point was out in the suburbs, and we managed to catch the right bus and transfer to the right subway, and got off at the right spot, despite Harriet's directions. Harriet herself was going by train. By this time I had developed an upset stomach, although perhaps it was my lucky day after all, since our ride, Jack Zeitz, was a pharmacist and quickly remidied the situation. The five of us -- Jack Zeitz, his pretty wife, Peggy Rae McKnight (who had joined us at the randevous point), Don, and myself -- piled into the first's Volkswagon. Although slightly cramped, we made the trip in good time and in reasonable comfort, and at last located 5th Avenue and, finally, Adelphi Hall.

At about 1 o'clock, I took my seat in the front row and awaited Sam Moscowitz's introduction. Having put off any speech-making until the last moment, I found myself with a few hastily-scrawled notes. Everyone took their seats -- there was quite a large crowd gathered -- and Sam began the first item on the program -- the fan editor's panel. He flatteringly introduced the four of us, and we went up on stage. James Taurasi, SF TIMES; Terry Carr, fan-turned-pro, late of FANAC and INNUENDO; George Willick, PARSECTION; and myself, MIRAGE. Each of us was given five minutes to tell why he thought fanzines were or were not beneficial to the field of science fiction. Taurasi spoke first, and was good for a while, but he spoke overly long, and strayed far off the subject, onto his non-fan publication, TINPLATE, about model railroads. Terry Carr spoke next, commenting first on Taurasi's remarks, and then launched into a well-constructed and interesting speech which had only two faults -- it strayed far, again, from the subject, and said what nobody else on the panel agreed with. Willick spoke briefly, but got us back on the track Taurasi had strayed from and Carr had forgotten, following Taurasi's lead. Willick voiced one statement I violently disagreed with; and that is that the fans -- and readers of fanzines like you and I -- are lousy critics, and that their opinions, coming from ill-trained minds, were not worth the paper upon which they were written. This was the first thing I refuted when I got up to speak, with the simple words "I disagree with Mr. Willick's last statements. Fans and fanzine readers are the best critics, and this is because they are the readers -- they are the ones who buy the prozines as

well, and if a prozine prints crud, it is not the critcs and pros who blast -- no, they applaud and rejoice at the finding of a new market for their formerly unsaleable crud. It is the fan, the reader, that tells that fanzine where to go, and it is for the reader, the Fan in the Street, that the prozine is published... and who, by his purchases, decides their fate."

I was nervous -- visibly so, and my words were covered with "Ah"s. But I did make my points. I could hardly think, and couldn't face the audience. Therefore, I looked down, giving the mistaken impression that I was reading my remarks. Then, when the mike prove to be too high, having been elevated to accomodate the tall lean frames of Carr and Willick, I drew a blank during the process of lowering the item, and drew a blank for several seconds. I recovered, not too gracefully, and closed hurriedly. I have heard a tape of my remarks since then, and I seem to have come across O.K., although the "Ah"-s and the blank spoiled it a little, next to the eloquence of Terry Carr, for instance Although I received a good reception, I couldn't shake the feeling that I'd made an ass of myself, and said so later to George Willick. He said that he felt much the same, but his did not show in his speech -- mine did... Finally we wound up with a question-and-answer panel discussion. Question: Are fanzines good training grounds for professional writers? Answer: a unanimous affermative to the question "could they be," but some hesitancies as to whether they were at the moment. Question: Are fanzines useful as archives? Answers: Terry Carr said yes, but cited an example which showed that in his understanding of the term "archive," it was information that helped the writer. In his case, the helpful information had been written previously by himself in his own fanzine and was useful only to him. So, I refuted him on those grounds. Question: Are fanzines good training grounds for editors? Answers: Everyone on the panel agreed that they were except me; I disagreed, noting that fandds, more than any other editor-types, tend to ignore the comments of the readers and other constructive criticism and do what they want to in spite of everything."Giving Joe Phann a typewriter, a mimeograph, and some stencils, does not make him an editor. He can publish for years and still turn out crud. Because he is a fanoditor does not mean that he knows the least about spelling, punctuation, grammar, or about style or plotting."(In MIRAGE all criticisms are considered and many used -- see CENTAUR #1, KALEIDOSCOPE #2, MIRs 3 and 4 for examples). SaM called then for comments from fans-turned-pro. Don Wollheim agreed generally with the panel; Fred Pohl, later, made it clear that he, too, saw things our way, but Lester Del Rey attacked all of our comments as ridiculous, damned us for our conclusions, and said that fanzines were good only for local gossip and news, and that any other attributed use was hogwash; and that they contribute and contributed nothing to the field, only to the egos of the fanods. Those and other Del Rey comments called for an immediate refutation, and his case could have been easily picked apart with concrete evidence at the disposal of all the members of the panel. Yet SaM then made his one and only mistake as emcee of the con, by immediately dismissing the panel without giving any of us any chance for rebuttal. This made the panel very mad, but we could do nothing. Yet the Del Rey outburst stands on record, thanks to this curt dismissal, as the superior group of statements through the virtue of being logical on the surface. None of it was wholly true; his fanzine comments were entirely false. Yet...we had no chance to say this.

Next on the program was Guest of Honor Fred Pohl's speech. He was short, but very entertaining, saying nothing in particular, but saying it fascinatingly, and came out with the bit of news that he was the Democratic candidate for Coroner in his county. (As of this writing, I don't know if he won or not). The body of the talk was refuting the figures brought out by the fanod panel. The major point of the panel was that only one true professional (Terry Carr) and 5 artists have risen to their position in prodom from the ranks of fans in the last 5 years. Ridiculous, said Pohl, editor of GALAXY and IF. The statement was plainly refuted with these facts: IF will contain, for the remainder of the year, at least, at least 1 story each issue by a new writer -- most of them rising from the fan ranks; that he has published literally hundreds of new authors, and fully 9/10ths came from fandom. The panel, I think, was fooling a bit bet-

tor after this eminent professional took a brief stab at Del Roy's remarks. Pohl also said that he's made a policy of presenting new, never-published writers in IF -- thus broadening a heretofore tight path to prodom by encouraging slush-pile contributors more than the solicited manuscript... On fanzine contribution to the field, however, he thought it significant that the Hugo-winning fanzine of last year was Kemp's WHO KILLED SF.

Next a break, at which time I had a coke with the Willicks. We discussed several things -- mostly how lousy we were on the panel and letting out our wrath against SaM (in the privacy of the drug-store) for cutting the panel when it was just getting interesting. Also discussed were several of the true "nuts" of the field, particularly those Who Shall Not Be Named But Initialed -- A.M.,W.B., and M.D. ...and everybody can draw their own conclusions from that.

Getting back, we found a haphazard and not at all fruitful auction conducted by Chris Moscowitz. Then SaM got the slide projector up, and we were shown almost 90 drawings and paintings of Virgil Finlay -- including his latest abstracts -- with an interesting commentary on the development of Finlay's style and his tremendous career, by SaM.

Another small break, and then Lester Del Rey and Randall Garrett took the stage, supposedly to debate dowsing, which turned out to be the only subject they didn't debate -- much to everyone's relief. Garrett talked on the use of magic in what purported to be straight prophetic science fiction -- i.e. things which contradicted much of the scientific theories, etc., such as the obviously impossible faster-than-light drive...impossible by known scientific laws and theories. Garrett talked at length on his psi stories for Campbell, too, and revealed the true, and much more acceptable, ending of OUT LIKE A LIGHT, which Campbell ordered changed to make Malone a Superpsi. All-in-all, very interesting, if overly long; even Del Rey was coherent and logical. I missed a bit of it, though, when Official Picture-Taker Don Studebaker was discovered by Harriet Kolchak to have taken only 2 pictures -- neither of the fanod's panel -- and I was delegated to get as many shots as possible. I did, but managed to trip over several people (sorry, Don Wollheim) in the process. IF ANYONE AT THE LUNACON TOOK PICTURES OF THE FAN-EDITOR'S PANEL AND IS READING THIS, PLEASE CONTACT ME.

Then, the con broke up, but not before I snared a Dollens original for $5 -- a low price despite Dollens' artwork being plentiful. Off to Smith's Restaurant went the crowd for supper. But the Zeitz's were nowhere in sight! So, I went on to the restaurant, confident that they had merely gone to some other place for dinner, and would return. Peggy Rae McKnight, however, pulled a boner, and went with the crowd over to the Whites,and kept us waiting after the Zeitz's return for 2 hours -- although she never did show up. She went back by bus, later. Finally, at 8 P.M., the Zeitz's and I -- minus Don, who was carrying the paper for this MIRAGE back on the train, and Peggy Rae, who was in Brooklyn (just why did you go to Brooklyn, Peggy?) headed back for Philly. From there, I was able to hop a subway, and managed to get, ultimately, to the Penn Station. The train ride home was uneventful, but when I caught a cab home I found that the day was not complete as yet! The cabbie was asleep when I got in, and, still half asleep, managed to hit two parked cars at 2 in the morning, and likewise forgot to turn on the meter. Finally, I did reach home, and, weary, sleep, but satisfied. I was in bed by 2 A.M. Thus ended the Lunacon adventure, and I thank you for bearing with one who is not used to writing such convention chronicles.

MAY 12-13 SAW THE DISCLAVE, in Washington, but this was a conference, not a con, and was actually one big happy two-day two-night party, and so not really enough to report on -- although good fun...really good fun.

NOTE:The cover illustration for the HPL biblio was put on without my knowledge or consent

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OTHER OF DARKNESS
BY JOHN DESTA
HARRY-'62

I was never allowed to call her my mother and when I did she would beat me. Savagely, with all her obsessed fury and the thrashings have left me with both the memories and markings of her rage. Yet she was my mother so that in absolute truth I can state that I never once in the twenty-six years I lived with her had even the remotest thoug of killing her -- an act which probably, even had I the most desperate desire to compose, would have been thwarted anyway, for she slept little, preferring the sleepless landscape beyond our mansion to the dreaded memories of bed and the happenings therein then, too, on nights after she had wreaked her insatiable and cruel tortures upon my person, consequently provoking at least the motive for retaliation, I was subsequently chained to the damp posts in the cellar beneath the house to cry and scream in utter agony, all to her full delight.

For this, not the beatings, I hated her; since it was in the dark and huge basement that her men were, and who in my presence were in the most horrid state possible, nearly returning to that frantic condition in which they were when first imprisoned. On those nights, as my sweating and wracked mind recalls, I myself was no longer human, but rather a stiff, terrified, hopeless demon bound to iron pillars that were slick with the sharpness of filed steel and wet with the liquid of my sweat-filled blood. It was usually days after those ordeals before I recalled anything and the many lapses in my memory bear witness to the frequency of my mother's (I say it with cold shudderings still) vengeance. But I am sure she never hated me, and, afterwards, when her warped and bitter soul was in its nearest proximity to humanity, I feel certain she pitied me with at least the fundamental relationship of creator to created. At those times, though it seems in contradition to the feeling stated above, and most likely due to the fact that it was the barest and only form of kindness I ever knew, I actually cared for her and would have undoubtedly defended her should the angry and revengeful beings imprisoned below have escaped somehow and come hungrily seeking her.

Indeed, in those moments she was but a step from womanhood, and the recollection of those brief hours fortify the bulwark of my few and isolated patches of happiness and hope, though that is a term which has little and probably incorrect meaning to me both now and in the time that she was alive. For it was only the hope of terrible vengeance which demanded that my mother live.

It was during those brief periods of restraint and near conscientiousness that I received the fundamental incentive toward knowledge. It should be obvious that time and its uses were bountiful things, leaving me a virtual wealth of minutes to pursue my interests which even in my outré surroundings were existent. For these concerns I again have my mother to thank, for it was she who, in her collected and near-sane mentality, introduced me to those interests which she herself once pursued before her plight became such as it now was. She had what I suppose was a beautiful voice, for, although I had never the opportunity for comparison among women vocalists, the occasions when the men were in the house were often ones in which she sang. This, I have no doubt, was the pretext under which many of them were induced to come: mother "lured" them into the domicile of an elderly and eccentric woman for the purpose of displaying their pedantic aptitudes -- a show which was to be their farewell appearance. Singing did strange things to her and it is with the weirdest of chills that I recall the vibrant, high-pitched, exultant notes that rang from the depths of the cellar after an affair had been completed.

Hers also was a fanatic love of poetry and often in the dim shadows of the great room that faced the grove and meadow before our house I sat in silence listening to the intricate and floating rhythms from her dewy throat. These scenes are those first in my mind: the massive room with the far-off ceiling, draped with the plush, dusty curtains; the aged oak panoling which surrounded a thick, matted carpet that sank and swelled under a passing foot; the wide, huge windows that jutted out of the house's side and gaped like huge lenses at the green countryside; the soft, staccatto voice of mother reading verse from her poets -- her loveliest of men. To her, they were her men.

How clearly I remember the soft lispings of her haggard frame as the words and anologies were borne into the stale air of that old, leather-chaired chamber. The soft, sensitive similes that caught at heart-strings and held them and pulled...until they should snap and drip blood and tears of lovelinoss...

Such age how beautiful! O lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favoring Nature and a saintly mind...

Perhaps her favorite was Whitman, that strange case of lonelinoss and dissatisfaction. How clearly I still can see the nearness to ecstasy in which she became enraptured when confronted with those powerful lines:

I know I am deathless,
I know this order of mine cannot be swept by a
carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue
cut with a burnt stick at night.

I have no trouble supposing that far within her she longed for one night with him, one rapture-filled darkness of bed love from which she might arise fulfilled and perpect. Possibly even, she imagined herself child to that "fierce old mother" of the bard of humanity. She loved poetry and song and their beauty which vastly complimented hers. For although I have not mentioned it before, my mother was dramatically beautiful! So much greater the contrast. Her clothes were ugly and her mind hideous, and it is for one thing alone that I owe her thanks -- she sowed the ripe seed of the quest for knowledge. I still se quest. On warm days, of which there were many in the valley, it was with vast pleasure that I walked beyond sight of the house and into the long meadows. The house itself was huge and of the type found atop craggy hills, staring boastfully into mountainous chasms and valleys. But our house was nestled within a ring of small domed hills, the sides of which ran like smooth mats upwards into a low-slung sky. The house, from on top of the hills, appeared like a dirty and sharp jewel, jutting spike-like out of the verdure and higher than the swaying willows which built low minarets around the towers of the gothic structure. Occasionally, in the evening, before the sun had set, we would walk in that green softness and inhale the misty fragrance of life and her beauties, though these concepts were strange ones, surely. I certainly remember the tall breach of trees that faced us as we started into the yard of uncut grasses; it was a wall of hanging vegetation that defied the stars and heavens and dropped small leaves into the shallow pond that ran, pencil-like, through them. In the dusk that settled into the valley at these twilight hours the trees stood out like shadowy sentinels, rigidly silhouetted against a gray sea of sky. They appeared lonely, not having mastered that reverent bliss of solitude that is isolation, and when the moon finally had risen, casting white melodies and filling the valley with splendor, they looked tragic.

It was after one of those night walks that the most vivid -- practically visual -- impressions of my mother's wrath remains. I daresay that I was an emotional being, although not usually prone to tears; yet I sufficed to plead the deep and profound feeling which rent my frame following my mother's readings, or, on strikingly beautiful nights, a walk outside the house when it became lost and wrapped in hanging, vine-like willow branches. Birds lived in the trees, and probably other animals thereabouts, but of these I was unaware at the time. Even the winged creatures whose notes so thrilled me were usually lost in the grandeur of high-thrown boughs and pillared trunks and were seldom outstanding in my mind, but on occasion it was so. Having a particularly refreshing walk, I was on completion mummified in felicitous joy.

It was in this state I deigned to express my affection and call her Mother!

What changes wrought themselves across her face which had become so glowingly aware to her surroundings! It was as if a blunt knife had been drawn across her features,

awakening the sore passions that had so flootingly roocssed inside her twisted consciousness. It was a diro moment for me, and to the blasting surge of curses too profane to mention I was pulled and whipped across the shadowy fields toward the house which now appeared a gaping, rod-misted demon, tremulous in the anticipation of that which was to ensue. The sky was closing in as clouds appeared over the house and the walk back to the grounds, choked and writhing in their roots, was filled with the mockories of whippcrwills.

It was days and possibly longer afterwards that awareness returned and I awoke sitting in the huge room, my mother reading to me, a stupefied and unperceiving audience, from her favorite of poets. I tittered and sat dully, confuses and disorientated, while the sight danced through my brain and recollection returned. Then, when it returned, and the terrors were renewed in my mind, I lept from my seat and stood glaring at her who sat calmly, even peacefully, in her huge brown chair inside the frame of one window. I stood, cowering inside myself, and met her fearful gaze which now silenced me and forced me into a chair to stifle my rent passions, freeing them to swell and burn within me. On this day the poetry was nothing, for it was the sharp and focused knowledge of the last torture which had filled me.

The dread of that last ordeal! The heinous, spleen-turning horror of that night in the near past shook the fibres of my weak being! The straight, deeply penetrating gaze of her who looked at me from passive -- even, apparently friendly -- eyes! It was too much, and began the charade of scenes before my inward eye.

My mother's harangue had been but a wind through immovable cliffs in comparison to the tirade of punishment which was mine once we reached the house. It would be of little necessity to delve into detail to compose an orderly arrangement of facts; to relate the torture my body endured -- the brute pounding of fists flung in stark anger and hatred; the kicks, hard and well-aimed; the ripping, scourging clawing which ushered forth rivers of blood from a ripped frame; the sheer, unimaginable despair and fear which I sustained while being beaten and stomped upon and permeated throughout with the maniacal gruntings -- not and yet nearly -- laughter. Oh God, the memory of her glowing eyes; eyes which nearly flamed red as the imprisoned unfortunates in the cellar, to whom I would presently go to be chained and lashed and left in despoiled darkness to seek out the candle-like tabernacles from which emanated the proof of her promiscuous indulgences, though that is stating it mildly. And the lashing that night was more hateful than most, for it was not often that I called her Mother. I received scars that night which remain indelibly impressed over countless others and to this day impart painful hours and sore-filled memories.

I was not present for the following horrors and shall actually be relating the events which I have seen happen in other instances. From those erstwhile experiences, I feel an odd note of gladness that I was absent from the proceedings, for my mother's attack, already catalyzed through me, must surely have been unimaginably demonic. So on with the dispersal of those facts which I have been most likely subconciously concealing thus far in this record. I pray to contain my sanity -- hoping it is still mine to contain -- while I once more delve into those events, being an actual and outstanding particular in my life.

After my mother had finished me, a man came to the house, and her gloatings made plain her evil thoughts. They ran true to form. My mother's humor must have been at awesome heights, for when I first stumbled out of my stupor to find myself chained to the stony pillars, I was shocked beyond description. There, not more than two steps from my drooping head, was the latest of the writhing, taper-like prisons: a neat, sturdy pyramid of bones which reached about twelve inches into the gloom of the fetid cellar. The bones were those of her latest victim. It was a witchly technique of hers,

and one which I know thoroughly, for she had no qualms about discussing it with me and actually took pride in so doing -- although the reason for it was never clear. Inside squirmed the wraithlike red glow which, I know, was the imprisoned soul. Within the sepulchor of his own bones, the murdered man was doomed to spend his eternal days, not even to be freed when the bones should decay into nothingness -- for when this happened, a strange and unusual bird-like thing (according to my mother) devoured the reddish life-force, depriving them at last of the freedom of eternity. Fantastic, undoubtedly, but true and in terms of all the other happenings -- believable, even if horribly diabolical. It was my mother's vengeance on all men, creatures whom she hated and hated and hated. Yet she must have realized that it was not my fault but really hers if anyone's that I was male, and it was probably this that saved me from similar ends.

Had the hours following my beating and consequent pillory in that dank, malodorous basement run the same to other cases to which I was witness, they would run something like this: the man had called at the house -- be he tramp or salesman is inconsequental -- not having been lured there under the already established pretext of musical talents (there had hardly been time). My mother invariably invited them to stay, and, after an exceptionally fine dinner, began her play of magnificent charm. It was a performance that should be seen to be appreciated. It was a seduction any man, be he beggar or bishop, could not resist. It was a classic interpretation of the powers of woman over man, and undeniable proof of the strings of existence she manipulates above his head. My mother's beauty, when loosed of her ragged clothing, was only part of the show -- the prop, you might say -- and it was her polished charm which really turned the act from a lusty comedy into a subtle tragedy. For, just at the moment when the male might submit to her adroit promiscuity, she struck!

It was usually with a knife, thin and long-handled, which she used deftly, inserting to the applause of a twisted grin into his whiskey-fed belly or slightly below, withdrawing it with a quick, corkscrew motion. This injured no bones, which was very necessary for the construction of that devilish pyramid which was to take the place of her hateful vengefulness. After this debauchery and while life still principally remained, the real pleasures began. And let it be known that sorrow will be eternally mine for not being a party to the feast which followed. It was another of the rare pleasures that filled my life -- the devouring of flesh and tissue in an ecstasy of wine-like blood. That night it was just further revenge on her part over me, and I waited deprived of any satisfaction of appetite.

Now bear in mind that this is all conjecture in regard to the last act of my mother. I first became aware of its outcome when the breath of consciousness stirred in the flat air of the cellar and the terrible structure of bones stood before me, its occupant flitting in maddening designs to and fro as they so often did when first made aware of their ghastly plight. Perhaps the full fear lay in the fact that when I first gazed from my blood-streaked and damaged face at the being, the red soul had risen into the skull which my mother placed above the pile of bodiless bones and stood glaring at me from hollow eye-sockets, an offset which nearly took my life. And suddenly I heard from nowhere -- and yet, everywhere -- a terrible screaching; the sound of the bird-thing was in my ears for the first time, although the reason for it I know not. I resumed cohorency seated in that plush room to the tune of my mother's readings...

Today my mother is dead, and her death was as inexplicable as her life had been. It began with the hard knock at the front door. In anticipation of a new man, I stayed back in my room, listening until the time should be right for me to take my place at the Feast. But this was not to be. I could not see the man from my doorway, but I could hear him plainly.

"So, ye wouldst first defy the Master by havin' a human son by that miserable wretch

Faraday, though why after what he done to ye is beyond me. From the Coven ye wast expelled, and from the Master's influences were ye barred, lest ye shouldst sacrifice the child to He of the Outer Darkness. Aye! And yer brain, twisted as it were by that fiendish Faraday -- may he choke on his harp-strings -- pursued yer needless vengeance upon the human folk, jeppardizin' the Society! And ye dare yet to use the Forbidden Words of the Master to wreak your childish vengeance!" The voice was old and crackily, yet it boomed out with great force and gave the impression of immense power. And then he yelled in a terrible voice at her, "MOTHER! Hah! Ye dared to defy the Master once -- and for that ye wast expelled and condemned with yer illegal brood! Yet ye hast dared use the Forbidden Word in defiance of the Master hisself! Argh! Ya sothuto vi Haturos!" With this queer chant there came a loud rumble, and in the rumble voices, hideous beyond description, boomed out in answer, speaking Words that awakened me great revulsion and fear, and I screamed and fled through the nearest doorway... the doorway to that accursed cellar! I ran down the steps in a blind frenzy, and sought a great pillar, which I hid behind whimpering softly, not daring to even look up, lest I be faced with that room's own horrors. And then, suddenly, I heard a noise...a soft, muffled padding -- footsteps! Someone was ascending the cellar stair!

I peered out from my hiding place, as much in wonder and curiosity as in fear. But I was not prepared for the sight that met my eyes. There, in the archway, a figure swayed drunkenly, attempting to brace itself by outstretching its arms to press against both walls. Its black hair writhed as if each strand were a snake; its face was horrible, the skin flaking off and revealing the skull beneath; the flesh was virtually melting from its arms and legs, revealing clean, white bone but nothing else. And I knew, from the tattered clothing and the bits of flesh that still remained, that this was my own, once-beautiful mother who stood there.

Suddenly, there was a noise, and I watched in horrible, half-numbed fascination as the figure turned towards a dark spot in the basement and emitted a horrible, inhuman scream. How long will it take to purge the horrors of those few moments from my tortured brain? For, out of that dark and damp corner, came a shadow -- just a shadow -- of the horrible creature whose sound so imitated that of a large bird. The forms were becoming more distinct. I screamed at the half-formed blasphemy, and the figure upon the stairs screamed with me. I passed into a delayed, but still merciful, oblivion.

When I awoke, I knew that something was wrong. I looked about, and saw that, while the terrible pyramids remained, there was no reddish glow in any. The souls of her poor victims had gone. And upon the stair was the greatest sorrow that I have ever known -- the lifeless, horribly mutilated and decayed body of the creature that had been my mother, and had met her end in a most fitting manner. And yet....

It was with a heavy heart and tear-laden eyes that I began mounting the stairway to that now empty house above...

.....John Festa

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DAVID H KELLER, M.D.:

NOTES ON STURGEON

* * * * *

IT HAS BEEN STATED THAT in commenting on the ability of an author to tell a good story, his best story should be criticised and not his worst. Most authors show considerable variation in the quality of their tales; it would not be correct to judge any of them by their worst productions. Thus in considering Sturgeon as a story teller I will confine my remarks to but one story -- but one which is constantly being referred to as a very noted horror tale. This is titled It and can be found in the Sturgeon collection of tales WITHOUT SORCERY. In the preface, Ray Bradbury says of this tale, "It is incredible, an unsmiling mask of a story, written in a black refrigerator at two in the morning." Sturgeon writes,"I was feeling so good that I took what poisons were in me at the moment and got rid of them in one pure splash of putrescence. It was very easy to do at the time and I wish I could do it again."

At various gatherings of readers, Sturgeon is always recalled as the author of this story and all, except myself, agree that it is a very fine tale and can be thought of as tops in the horror class. When I differ with them they look at me as if I were abnormal; perhaps not feeble-minded but certainly a most peculiar person "who could not see the real beauty in a tale whose perfection is so easily discerned."

One of the most important features in a good story is its illusion of reality. It may be like a jog saw puzzle with a number of pieces that are oddly shaped, but they must finally fit together so that a perfect picture is formed without one piece left out. A story may be like a number of strings of various colors and lengths, but they can be tied together, rolled in a ball, and can be then placed in a library. If, however, the story has some iron pipes, long sticks of wood in addition to the strings, it cannot be tied together and made into a ball. Thus, no matter how bizarre or unusual a story is, it must not contain any contradictions. When the reader scans the story for the first time, he must believe it; later he may say that it is impossible, but he should be able to accept it when he first reads it no matter how peculiar a story it may be.

Sturgeon starts the story It with the description of a monster. He writes: "It was never born, but it existed. It grew but was not alive. It did not live." All this is contradictory. He asks us immediately to accept impossibilities. How can anything exist without being born or in some way created? Only living things grow -- how could it do so if it was not alive in some way? He continues the description: "It was lumped, crusted with some hateful substance -- pieces of it dropped off writhing and stilled and lay putrescent in the forest loam." And yet not too much later the author will tell us that this mass was formed around the skeleton of a dead man and that the monster's shape was human!

We try to visualize this monster. Evidently it is a mass of dough-like matter covering a skeleton. Parts of the dough drop off when the creature scrapes against a tree, and when the surface dries, it flakes. The monster has only two parts -- bones, and the covering dough. There are no muscles, there is no heart or circulatory system. There is a skull but no brain or nervous system. And yet on the first page Sturgeon writes that it has "strength and great intelligence." This fantasy is not based on any reality. He is asking us to believe that there exists a monster who is able to walk and is very

strong yet has no muscles! It is extremely intelligent, yet it has no brain! The reader tries to accept the existence of such a being, but [illegible] can not understand it.

Sturgeon supports his statement of strength by telling how this monster behaves. It takes a young sapling and tears it into pieces; it picks up a frozen field creature and crushes it in his hand to a bloddy pulp. It fights a hunting dog and crushes its skull with one blow of its hand; it raises a little girl by her pigtail and holds her up in the air. It fights and kills a man. In the course of a few hours it accomplishes feats which would tax an athelete. It does all this with bare hands that are nothing but bones covered with dough so soft that particles of it drop off just from the vibration of its walking!

During it's short life it is constantly thinking, wondering about the dark night and the dawn of day. It tried to understand the dog, the little girl, the man it killed after he had shot at it. It worries about life and about death. It does all this without a brain.

At last it falls into a stream and lies there while the water washes the dough from the skeleton. It keeps on thinking, and says: "I am growing smaller. Soon the part of me that thinks will be gone. I will stop thinking and I will stop being and, that too, is an interesting thing."

Without even a tiny brain the monster is now a philosopher!

Finally, only the skeleton of the monster remains. As the covering is removed from the bones the monster says that it cannot understand life; conversely, we can't understand the monster! His is a most curious combination of contradictions and outright impossibilities. This story irritates me because I believe that Sturgeon is too good an author to compose such a tale. Bradbury terms the story "incredible." He certainly describes it correctly. To me it is nothing more than poor mood writing in which many of the cardinal principles of story-telling are either discarded or ignored.

...David H. Keller, M.D.
Jan. 15, 1960

THE DISILLUSIONMENT

What fear has death,
When the Sons of Man are Craven?

Why should the Chalice be bitter
If the Mass is not said?

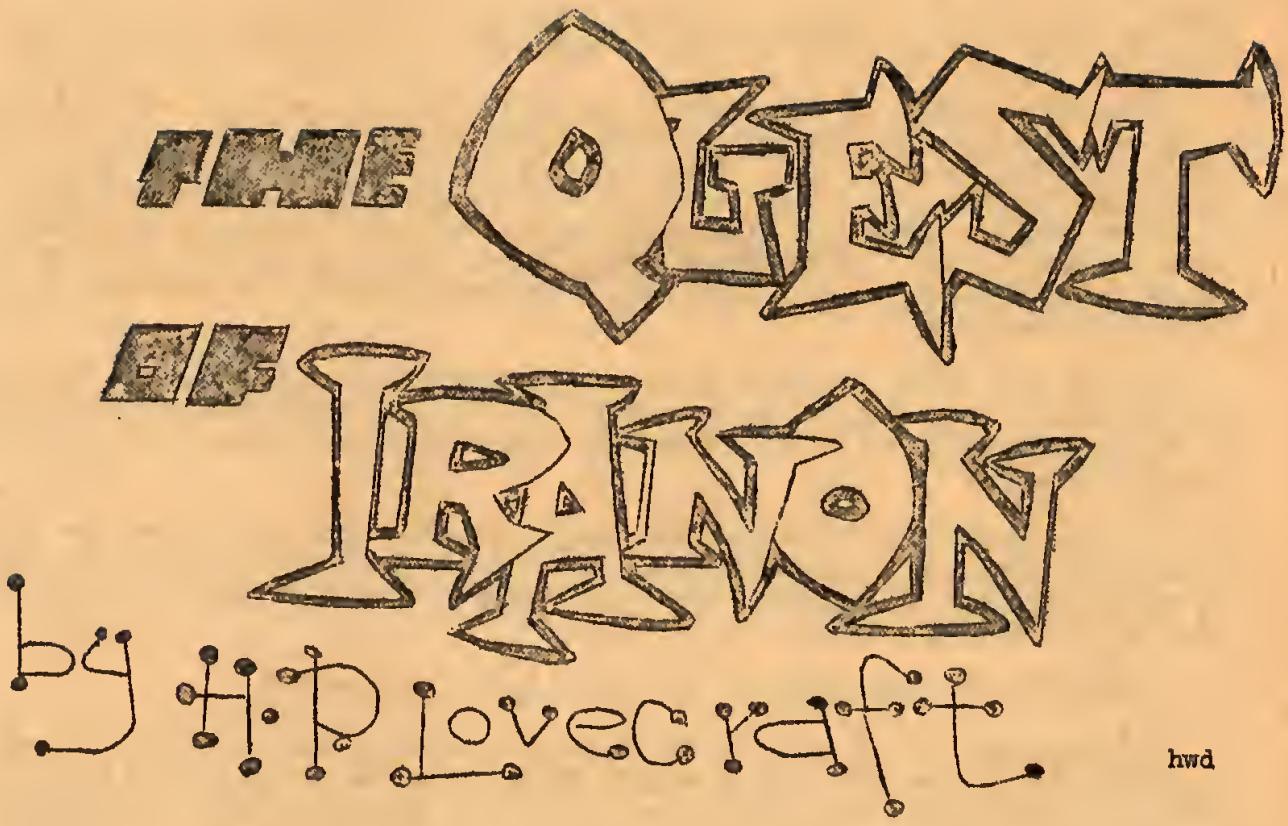
How shall the priests commit Sacrilege
If none is faithful?

I ask,

Why plight a troth
When the Bible is a book of rhymes?

Is the Murder of Satan
A Sin?

...C. Jon DeCles



INTO THE GRANITE CITY OF TELOTH wandered the youth, vine-crowned, his yellow hair glistening with myrrh and his purple robe torn with briers of the mountain Sidrak that lies across the antique bridge of stone. The men of Teloth are dark and stern, and dwell in square houses, and with frowns they asked the stranger whence he had come and what were his name and fortune. So the youth answered:

"I am Iranon, and come from Aira, a far city that I recall only dimly but seek to find again. I am a singer of songs that I learned in the far city, and my calling is to make beauty with the things remembered of childhood. My wealth is in little memories and dreams, and in hopes that I sing in gardens when the moon is tender and the west-wind stirs the lotus-buds."

When the men of Teloth heard these things they whispered to one another; for though in the granite city their is no laughter or song, the stern men sometimes look to the Karthian hills in the spring and think of the lutes of distant Oonai whereof travellers have told. And thinking thus, they bade the stranger stay and sing in the square before the Tower of Mlin, though they liked not the colour of his tattered robe, nor the myrrh in his hair, nor his chaplet of vine-leaves, nor the youth in his golden voice. At evening Iranon sang, and while he sang an old man prayed and a blind man said he saw a nimbus over the singer's head. But most of the men of Teloth yawned, and some laughed, and some went away to sleep; for Iranon told nothing useful, singing only his memories, his dreams, his hopes.

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"I remember the twilight, the moon, and soft songs, and the window where I was rocked to sleep. And through the window was the street where the golden lights came, and where the shadows danced on houses of marble. I remember the square of moonlight on the floor, that was not like any other light, and the visions that danced in the moonbeams when my mother sang to me. And too I remember the sun of morning bright above the many-coloured hills in summer, and the sweetness of flowers borne on the south wind that made the trees sing.

"O Aira, city of marble and beryl, how many are thy beauties! How I loved the warm and fragrant groves across the hyaline Nithra, and the falls of the tiny Kra that flowed through the verdant valley! In those groves and in that vale the children wove wreaths for one another, and at dusk I dreamed strange dreams under the Yath-trees on the mountain as I saw below me the lights of the city, and the curving Nithra reflecting a ribbon of stars.

"And in the city were palaces of veined and tinted marble, with golden domes and painted walls, and green gardens with cerulean pools and crystal fountains. Often I played in the gardens and waded in the pools, and lay and dreamed among the pale flowers under the trees. And sometimes at sunset I would climb the long hilly street to the citadel and the open place, and look down upon Aira, the magic city of marble and beryl, splendid in a robe of golden flame.

"Long have I missed thee, Aira, for I was but young when we went into exile; but my father was thy King and I shall come again to thee, for it is so decreed of Fate. All through seven lands have I sought thee, and someday I shall reign over thy groves and gardens, thy streets and palaces, and sing to men who shall know whereof I sing, and laugh not nor turn away. For I am Iranon, who was a Prince in Aira."

That night the men of Teloth lodged the stranger in a stable, and in the morning an archon came to him and told him to go to the shop of Athok the cobbler, and be apprenticed to him.

"Bit I am Iranon, a singer of songs," he said, "and have no heart for the cobbler' trade."

"All in Teloth must toil," replied the archon, "for that is the law." Then said Iranon: "Wherefore do ye toil; is it not that ye may live and be happy? And if ye toil only that ye may toil more, when shall happiness find you? Ye toil to live, but is not life made of beauty and song? And if ye suffer no singers among you, where shall be the fruits of your toil? Toil without song is like a weary journey without an end. Were not death more pleasing?" But the archon was sullen and did not understand, and rebuked the stranger.

"Thou art a strange youth, and I like not thy face or thy voice. The words thou speakest are blasphemy, for the gods of Teloth have said that toil is good. Our gods have promised us a haven of light beyond death, where there shall be rest without end, and crystal coldness amidst which none shall vex his mind with thought or his eyes with beauty. Go thou then to Athok the cobbler or be gone out of the city by sunset. All here must serve, and song is folly."

So Iranon went out of the stable and walked over the narrow stone streets between the gloomy square houses of granite, seeking something green, for all was of stone. On the faces of men were frowns, but by the stone embankment along the sluggish river Zure sat a young boy with sad eyes gazing into the waters to spy green budding branches washed down from the hills by the freshets. And the boy said to him:

"Art thou not indeed he of whom the archons tell, who seekest a far city in a fair land? I am Ramnod, and born of the blood of Teloth, but am not old in the ways of the granite city, and yearn daily for thw warm groves and the distant lands of beauty and song. Beyond the Karthian hills lieth Oonai, the city of lutes and dancing, which men whisper of and say is both lovely and terrible. Thither would I go were I old enoughold enough to find the way, and thither shouldst thou go and thou wouldst sing and have men listen to thee. Let us leave the city of Teloth and fare together among the hills of spring. Thou shalt show me the ways of travel and I will attend thy songs at evening when the stars one by one bring dreams to the minds of dreamers. And paradventure it may be that Oonai the city of lutes and dancing is even the fair Aira thou seekest, for it is told that thou hast not known Aira since old days, and a name often changeth. Let us go to Oonai, O Iranon of the golden head, where men shall know our longings and welcome us as brothers, nor ever laugh or frown at what we say." And Iranon answered:

"Be it so, small one; if any in this stone place yearn for beauty he must seek the mountains and beyond, and I would not leave thee to pine by the sluggish Zuro.But think not that delight and understanding dwell just across the Karthian hills, or in any spot thou canst find in a day's, or a year's, or a lustrum's journey. Behold, when I was small like thee I dwelt in the valley of Narthos by the frigid Xari, where none would listen to my dreams; and I told myself that when older I would go to Sinara on the southern slope, and sing to smiling dromedary-men in the market place. But when I went to Sinara I found the dromedary-men all drunken and ribald, and saw that their songs were not as mine, so I travelled in a barge down the Xari to onyx-walled Jaren. And the soldiers at Jaren laughed at me and drave me out, so that I wandered to many other cities. I have seen Stetholos that is below the great cataract, and have gazed on the marsh where Sarnath once stood. I have been to Thraa, Ilarnek, and Kadatheron, on the winding river Ai,and have dwelt long in Olathoë in the land of Lomar. But though I have had listeners sometimes, they have ever been few, and I know that welcome shall wait me only in Aira, the city of marble and beryl where my father once ruled as King. So for Aira shall we seek, though it were well to visit distant and lute-blessed Oonai across the Karthian hills, which may indeed be Aira, though I think not. Aira's beauty is past imagining, and none can tell of it without rapture, whilst of Oonai the camel-drivers whisper leeringly."

At the sunset Iranon and small Ramnod went forth from Teloth, and for long wandered amidst the green hills and cool forests. The way was rough and obscure, and never did they seem nearer to Oonai, the city of lutes and dancing; but in the dusk as the stars came out Iranon would sing of Aira and its beauties and Ramnod would listen, so that they were both happy, after a fashion. They ate plentifully of fruit and red berries, and marked not the passing of time, but many years must have slipped away. Small Ramnod was now not so small, and spoke deeply instead of shrilly, though Iranon was always the same, and decked his golden hair with vines and fragrant resins found in the woods. So it came to pass one day that Ramnod seemed older than Iranon, though he had been very small when Iranon had found him watching for green budding branches in Teloth beside the sluggish stone-banked Zuro.

Then one night when the moon was full the travellers came to a mountain crest and looked down upon the myriad lights of Oonai. Peasants had told them they were near,and Iranon knew that this was not his native city of Aira. The lights of Oonai were not like those of Aira; for they were harsh and glaring, while the lights of Aira shine as softly and magically as shone the moonlight on the floor by the window where Iranon's mother once rocked him to sleep with song. But Oonai was a city of lutes and dancing, so Iranon and Ramnod went down the steep slope that they might find men to whom songs and dreams would bring pleasure. And when they were come into the town they found rose-wreathed revellers bound from house to house and leaning from windows and balconies,

who listened to the songs of Iranon and tossed him flowers and applauded him when he was done. Then for a moment did Iranon believe that he had found those who thought and felt even as he, though the town was not a hundredth so fair as Aira.

When dawn came, Iranon looked about with dismay, for the domes of Oonai were not golden in the sun, but grey and dismal. And the men of Oonai were pale with revelling, and dull with wine, and unlike the radiant men of Aira. But because the people had thrown him blossoms and acclaimed his songs Iranon stayed on, and with him Rammed, who liked the revelry of the town and wore in his dark hair roses and myrtle. Often at night Iranon sang to the revellers, but he was always as before, crowned only with the vine of the mountains and remembering the marble streets of Aira and the hyaline Nithra. In the frescoed halls of the Monarch did he sing, upon a crystal dias raised over a floor that was a mirror, and as he sang, he brought pictures to his hearers till the floor seemed to reflect old, beautiful, and half-remembered things instead of the wine-reddened feasters who pelted him with roses. And the king bade him put away his tattered purple, and clothed him in satin and cloth-of-gold, with rings of green jade and bracelets of tinted ivory, and lodged him in a gilded and tapestried chamber on a bed of sweet carven wood with canopies and coverlets of flower-embroidered silk. Thus dwelt Iranon in Oonai, the city of lutes and dancing.

It is not known how long Iranon tarried in Oonai, but one day the King brought to the palace some wild whirling dancers from the Liranian desert, and dusky flute-players from Drinon in the East, and after that the revellers threw their roses not so much at Iranon as at the dancers and flute-players. And day by day that Rammed who had been a small boy in granite Teloth grew coarser and redder with wine, till he dreamed less and less, and listened with less delight to the songs of Iranon. But though Iranon was sad he ceased not to sing, and at evening told again his dreams of Aira, the city of marble and beryl. Then one night the reddened and fattened Rammed snorted heavily among the poppied silks of his banquet-couch and died writhing, whilst Iranon, pale and slender, sang to himself in a far corner. And when Iranon had wept over the grave of Rammed, and strewn it with green budding branches, such as Rammed used to love, he put aside his silks and gauds and went forgotten out of Oonai the city of lutes and dancing clad only in the ragged purple in which he had come, and garlanded with fresh vines from the mountains.

Into the sunset wandered Iranon, seeking still for his native land and for men who would understand and cherish his songs and dreams. In all the cities of Cydathria and in the lands beyond the Bnazic desert grey-faced children laughed at his olden songs and tattered robe of purple; but Iranon stayed ever young, and wore wreaths upon his golden head whilst he sang of Aira, delight of the past and hope for the future.

So he came one night to the squalid cot of an antique shepherd, bent and dirty, who kept flocks upon a stony slope, above a quicksand marsh. To this man Iranon spoke, as to so many others:

"Canst thou tell me where I may find Aira, the city of marble and beryl, where flow the hyaline Nithra and where the falls of the tiny Kra sing to verdant valleys and hill fretted with yath trees?" And the shepherd, hearing, looked long and strangely at Iranon, as if recalling something very far away in time, and noted each line of the stranger's face, and his golden hair, and his crown of vine-leaves. But he was old, and shook his head, and replied:

"O stranger, I have indeed heard the name of Aira, and the other names thou hast spoken, but they came to me from afar down the waste of long years. I heard them in my youth from the lips of a playmate, a beggar's boy given to strange dreams, who would weave long tales about the moon and the flowers and the west wind. We used to laugh at

him, for we know him from his birth though he thought himself a King's son. He was comely, even as thou, but full of folly and strangeness; and he ran away when small to find those who would listen gladly to his songs and dreams. How often hath he sung to me of lands that never were, and things that can never be! Of Aira did he speak much; of Aira and the river Nithra, and the falls of the tiny Kra. There would he ever say he once dwelt as prince, though here we know him from his birth. Nor was there ever a marble city of Aira, or those who could delight in strange songs, save in the dreams of mine old playmate Iranon who is gone."

And in the twilight, as the stars came out one by one and the moon cast on the marsh a radiance like that which a child sees quivering on the floor as he is rocked to sleep at evening, there walked into the lethal quicksands a very old man in tattered purple, crowned with withered vine-leaves and gazing ahead as if upon the golden domes of a fair city where dreams are understood. That night something of youth and beauty died in the older world.

....H.P. Lovecraft

MALIGNANT LOVE

Far worse than any virus-borne disease
Are ravages of love that's unreturned;
It gnaws, unseen, like cancer at the heart,
Until that tortured musculature stops.
The blood grows dark and stagnant in the veins,
So that in airless calm the brain cells die
And quench at last their horrid memories,
Like city lights extinguished, one by one.

.....John E. Votter

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1893 - 1961
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H.P. Lovecraft
PROSSER 72

AS I REMEMBER KLARKASH-TON

BY GEORGE F. HAAS

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following excellent memoir of the late, great Clark Ashton Smith is the first tribute to that great writer since his death last August. Anthon Pross will bring out late this year a booklet of 50 or more pages titled IN MEMORIAM: CLARK ASHTON SMITH. The piece you are about to read -- as well as the supurb Prosser portrait--is taken from the contents of that booklet. For one of the finest memoirs, and a sterling example of our varied contents -- which include reprints of CAS, memoirs by his friends, fans, and contemporary writers, critiques, etc., we present this piece. We think that George F. Haas has, more than anyone, captured the man, Clark Ashton Smith, in words which present one of the greatest -- yet oddly obscure -- fantasy writers who ever lived......

AS I REMEMBER KLARKASH-TON

I have been asked to write of the late, eminent Clark Ashton Smith, for they say I know him better and longer than most others; that I should tell what manner of man he was; that I should make comments on his varied talents. Yet to write adequately of Klarkash-Ton, I should take for pen the quill of the wing-tip of the fabled Gazolba-bird, dipped deep in the wetted dust of powdered mummies, and write ebulliently with rare hieroglyphs on parchment fashioned from the skins of serpent-men.

But I have only this poor typewriter and the words will not come at my command. I am rich in memories of a close and dear friend, and I have but to glance about my library as I write this to be reminded of him. There are evidences of him everywhere. There, in a case, is my collection of his memorable carvings in stone, many of which he carved especially for me, and I hold in my hand an ancient and battered jack-knife with which he fashioned some of them. His paintings and drawings hang on the walls. And here is the first photograph I took of him, at our initial meeting. There is a photograph taken of him long, long ago, in 1912, when he was but nineteen years old, every inch the poet, with long, tousled hair and the sad eyes that even then were beginning to look down vistas wherein we mortals fear to follow. In that case are all his books, all with personal inscriptions, his published volumes of poetry and prose. In this chest are all the issues of the fabulous WEIRD TALES magazine which contain the first printings of the bulk of his published works. This mandarin-red cabinet holds our correspondence and further files of Klarkash-Toniana -- photographs, notes, manuscripts; all the memorabilia I have been able to collect and treasure over the years. I have but to turn a switch on the tape recorded behind me to hear his voice intoning the haunting, measured cadences of his "From the Crypts of Memory."

For many years now it has been my fancy to call my library-den "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" after the title of Klarkash-Ton's famous story, one of his most memorable tales

Quotations from H.P. Lovecraft are printed through the courtesy of the H.P. Lovecraft estate, and of Arkham House, who are compiling Lovecraft's SELECTED LETTERS.

(which first appeared in WEIRD TALES in May, 1932). It is well known that when the noted fantasy fan R.H. Barlow was but seventeen, Lovecraft visited him at his home in Florida and stayed a month. Barlow had a locked closet in which he kept his collection of fantasy magazines and books and he had named it "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis." After Barlow's untimely death in Mexico in 1951, I had appropriated the name for my own library-den with Klarkash-Ton's subsequent, somewhat bemused, approval. Not the least of the treasures here in the "Vaults" is Klarkash-Ton's own copy of that issue of WEIRD TALES containing that story.

Yes, memories still linger here in the "Vaults" where Klaskash-Ton visited many times. I can see him now, sitting quietly in that wicker chair with a glass of red wine in one hand and a pipe in the other. Or I see him thumbing through an ancient copy of WEIRD TALES or moving slowly about the shadowed room examining curious books.

But I think I shall always want to remember Klarkash-Ton as I first saw him on that day long ago, on the occasion of my first visit to him at his unbrageous abode among the blue oak trees near Auburn. And I am glad I met him when he was still the fabled, strange, and darkling genius of Auburn; still the lone "Star Treader," the far wanderer among pallid suns, the legendary "Emperor of Dreams." After he married and moved to Pacific Grove, it was never quite the same. He was still the same Klarkash-Ton, but the image of the strange recluse, the hermit of Auburn, had somehow disappeared.

That first visit was the culmination of a period of long years of admiration from afar. That admiration extended far back into the early days of WEIRD TALES magazine, and to me Klarkash-Ton was always a fabulous figure - remote, legendary, and far removed in both time and space. For lengthy years, end on end, I had held the eminent "Master of Fantasy" in great awe and high regard, and little dreamed that I would, or could, ever meet him. Does one dream of meeting Poe?

It was not until September 11, 1953, that I took courage to actually make the pilgrimage to Auburn to seek out the sinister sorceror himself in his dark cabin among the blue oak trees. Not the least of my hesitations might be attributed to having read, not so long before, the fine tribute to him in FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES magazine, in the August, 1949, issue. They had indeed most fittingly scheduled him as the 13th in their famous series. They had referred to "those who have made the pilgrimage to his unbrageous abode in Auburn - and returned alive (and in full possession of their facilities." Nevertheless, I think it was that tribute in FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES that finally decided me to accept the dare.

At that time few people in the fantasy world had ever met him. Of the writers, I know of only a few: Henry Kuttner and E. Hoffman Price visited him in 1942. Donald Wandrei had paid him a visit, and August Derleth had met him at the cabin a few weeks before I did in 1953. Henry Hasse and Emil Petaja, both writers for WEIRD TALES, together with RAH (R.A. Hoffman) and Paul Freehafer, made the pilgrimage in the early forties. R.H. Barlow had visited Klarkash-Ton, probably in the late forties, with a small group from the Los Angeles area. At that time Klarkash-Ton gave him the original manuscript of "The Hashish Eater" which Barlow later bound in coral-snake skin! One wonders where that manuscript is now. In spite of my own hesitations, I still find it incredible that other writers or fantasy fans never found it convenient to make the trip to Auburn to express in person their appreciation to one who, on the death of Lord Dunsany, was to become the dean of living fantasy writers.

Before proceeding: a word regarding the term "Klarkash-Ton" might be in order and of some interest. It is well known that H.P. Lovecraft used pet nicknames for a few of his favored correspondents in the so-called "Lovecraft Circle." For example, he address-

od Robert E. Howard as "Two-Gun Bob," Frank Belknap Long as "Belnapius," and August Derleth as "M. le Comte d'Erlette." But it was surely a happy stroke of genius when, early in their long correspondence, he began addressing Clark Ashton Smith as "Klark-ash-Ton." There is something about the look of the name when you see it in print that typifies the man and his works. It conjures up Atlantean images intoning dread spells, of dark necromancers of far Zothique distilling strange potions under a dying sun. For indeed Klarkash-Ton's poetry and prose are intonations and distillations of the very essence of all that is strange, exotic, forbidden - potions few of us dare to quaff.

Lovecraft signed many of his letters "Eeh-Pi-El," which simply signifies his initials spelled phonetically, and it is pronounced as one would pronounce his initials--H.P.L. "Klarkash-Ton," of course, is pronounced "Clark Ashton."

I have always called Clark Ashton Smith "Klarkash-Ton" and the term has meant a great deal to me personally. Shortly after we first met and began corresponding, he started signing his letters to me as "Klarkash-Ton." He addressed me as "Ji-Eeh," saying "We might as well keep up the Lovecraft tradition." He has inscribed most of his books for me as "For Ji-Eeh from Klarkash-Ton." Over the years I have become so used to addressing him in letters and in person as Klarkash-Ton that I actually think Klark-ash-Ton and not Clark Ashton.

I had written Klarkash-Ton on the 31st of August asking if I could come to Auburn on September 11th and if he could spare me an hour or so on that date. His prompt reply was so utterly delightful, so reminiscent of the directions in Poe's "The Gold Bug" that I want to share it here:

Auburn, Calif.,
Sept. 5th, 1953

"Dear Mr. Haas:

I'll be glad to see you next Friday, Sept. 11th. If you come in on the Greyhound, I suggest having the driver let you off in Lower Auburn at the junction of the speed-way with Lincoln Way. Follow Lincoln Way to Sacramento St. (right turns in each case) and come out Sacramento St., which becomes the Folsom Highway at the town limits, go-ing south. One fourth mile farther on, take the left turn marked Carolina St., going east, then turn south again at the next right hand turn. Open, and shut behind you the wire gate at the end of the lane, and follow rough tracks to my cabin, a distance of about 250 yards. Horse-trails may confuse the issue; but bear a little to the right of the dark-green pine which you will perceive rising above the woods.

The distance is about one and one-quarter miles from Lower Auburn. If this seems too far to walk, a taxi called from one of the down-town bars or stores would bring you as far as the wire gate for (probably) 75¢.

Hasta la vista!

Sincerely yrs.,
Clark Ashton Smith"

When I got off the bus in Auburn I was hungry so I had lunch at a small cafe' in new or upper Auburn. I decided to walk the mile and a quarter, southward, to Klarkash-Ton's abode, holding in my hand as I went his intricate directions. I had never been in Auburn before and I wanted to sense the flavor of his home town where he had, up to now, lived the major portion of his life. And I wanted to survey the countryside along the road I knew he traveled almost daily as he came into town to shop and get his mail. Per-haps, too, I subconciously wanted to postpone as long as possible this first meeting with the forbidding and legendary recluse.

Klarkash-Ton met me at the wire gate; he opened and closed it for me. He had been watching and waiting for me, lingering at the edge of the grassy, wood-strewn glade.

I had no idea how I would be received but after the initial handshake and introductory words, almost immediately there was established between us an unspoken rapport that was never to be broken, that was to endure until the very end. I have never known anyone with whom I have been more comfortable or more completely at ease. It would also be trite to say I felt as if I had always known him, but it was like that. Any lingering doubts I may have had as to my welcome, or any lingering fear I may still have harbored of this Atlantean necromancer, faded away as quickly as the struck note of a gong

I examined him with interest since I had seen no picture of him other than the rather indistinct photographs of him in MARGINALIA or the drawings made of him for the old WONDER STORIES magazine. Klarkash-Ton was sixty years old that year when I first met him. He was slightly stooped, but, I should judge, about five feet eleven inches in height. He wore a short mustache. His hair was light brown, straight, and although I looked later, I could not detect a single grey hair. His wide, high-domed forehead was quite wrinkled. He seemed somewhat frail, yet he had an amazing barrel-chest. His brown eyes were those of the dreamer, of the mystic, of one who has looked far into unfathomed depths, and indeed his had. They were the eyes of a poet; they were gentle and kindly eyes, yet there was about them an infinite sadness. He was plainly but neatly dressed in an old pair of brown slacks and a short-sleeved, rather loudly-colored sports shirt. On his feet were blue-cloth, rubber-soled sneakers, while on his head, to keep his fine, silky hair from flying, was what was almost a trademark with him - a bright red beret.

We walked the 250 yards through the grove of blue oak trees along a mere horse trail. The oak trees, Quercus douglasi, are really blue; the leaves of some specimens have an almost luminous blue sheen. On other specimens the leaves are blue-green, but all have light, ashy-grey bark. Many trees were bearded with hanging moss and there were bunches of mistletoe in the branches. High, wild grasses and curious weeds, now dead and brown, bordered the path and covered the openings between the trees. I was to visit Klarkash-Ton's land again in an earlier season and find it green and lush, a tapestry of wild flowers. But now his landscape was brown and dead, seared by the hot summer sun. I recall it in detail because it was a desolate, fantastic setting, almost macabre, in its sterile dryness. I recall thinking then: "It is a fitting site for the habitation of one 'who has sailed in galleys of Zothique,' or trodden the pale planets of the nether suns. It was a bit of moon scape with odd scattered boulders, with the deadness relieved only by the blue of the oaks, and the dark green of the single pine.

His cabin sat in the open, under the hot sun, a little way out from the southern edge of the grove. Beyond lay space and open fields with only a barbed-wire fence in the distance to suggest any neighbors. The cabin itself was old and small with a lean-to at the back and a wide sleeping porch extending the full length of the front. The wide boards and wood-shingles of the sides were silvered and grey; on the roof were dark, tar-paper shingles. We passed through an opening in a low, stone wall, reminiscent of those in New England, which extended across the front of the cabin on the west side. He had built this wall himself, long years ago, using the lava and granite boulders with with the cabin site is strewn.

Here in this simple cabin Klarkash-Ton had lived since earliest childhood (he was born in Long Valley, a few miles away); here he had lived with his mother and father until their deaths — first his father, and then later his mother, in 1937. Originally the land, a homestead, had comprised forty acres, but on the death of his father he had sold all but a little over two acres immediately surrounding the cabin, in order to pay funeral expenses. His father's death grieved him deeply, and it was to recover from this sorrow in the forgetfulness of heavy labor, that he set about building the wall of stones. Klarkash-Ton greatly revered both his mother and father and at the time I visited him their ashes reposed in urns on an honored shelf in the cabin's main room.

Klarkash-Ton, of necessity, lived simply and frugally since his income from the sale of his writing was never large. WEIRD TALES, which published the bulk of his writings, never paid over a cent a word. To supplement his meager funds he worked at part-time labor at such tasks as thinning fruit or pruning trees in orchards in the area. In times past he had worked at mining, gardening, picking and packing fruit, typing, wood-chopping, or at anything else that came to hand. However, in later years, after the death of his parents, his expenses had been few except for food, as he had no rent or utilities to pay. Fuel for cooking and heating was wood he cut himself from his own oak trees; he burned kerosene in old wick lamps for light; water was obtained from his own spring, a few feet from his cabin. When I asked why he did not grow vegetables, he explained that he had tried it but his spring did not supply sufficient water for irrigation.

When I entered his cabin for the first time it was evident that he had spent some time, shortly before, cleaning up in preparation for my arrival. The floor, of wide, plain boards, had been swept clean and he had kept down the dust by lightly sprinkling it with water before sweeping. There were still patches of spattered dampness and I smiled at this old country custom -- I had done the same thing a thousand times in old houses in past years.

I glanced around with the greatest interest, but I am afraid that in my excitement I did not take in many details. There seemed to be several small rooms but we proceeded into what was evidently a combination living-room, study, library, and kitchen. A pot of beans simmered on the back of an ancient wood stove and the fragrance was so good as to almost make me hungry again. My remembrances now recall an impression of cluttered orderliness. There were low bookcases around the walls jammed with books -- overflowing onto the floor! -- and to shelves and chairs. There were bulging cartons and boxes everywhere filled with papers, manuscripts, magazines, and, in a corner, I spotted a high pile of old WEIRD TALES. Dust was everywhere, as befits a bachelor's mountain cabin, except on the recently swept floor. I remember Klarkash-Ton picking up one of Montague Summers' books on vampires to show me. He blew on it, and the cloud of dust addled and swirled in the dim room leaving us almost choking and gasping. Since it was so hot in the cabin that early afternoon hour, he suggested that we go out and sit under the trees.

A little way from the cabin, under a group of gnarled and lichen-littered blue oak trees, was a metal army cot spread with a tattered sleeping bag. Before it there was a small table, homebuilt, of rough, weathered boards. The site commanded a view to the south and west of the ever-descending blue foothills and on into the haze of the great valley itself. It was here at this rickity table, under those ancient blue oak trees, -- in summer, at least -- that Clark Ashton Smith composed and wrote the bulk of his literary works -- his stories as well as his poems -- and it was here that he worked on many of his memorable carvings. Here he slept on hot summer nights.

We sat on the old army cot, talked, and began to get acquainted. It was a quiet, peaceful spot with no sound of the traffic on the distant highway and only the occasional drone of a passing aircraft. Red dragonflies darted over the seared summer grasses and there was but a suggestion of a breeze rustling the long needles of the tall Western Yellow pine just beyond us. It was warm, but not uncomfortably so in the shade.

Finally, "Do you like wine?" he asked, and when I assented he added, "All fantasy fans like wine." He went back into the cabin and came out with two glasses and a bottle of Marsala which we sipped as we began discussing everything from avatars to Zothique.

When I asked about his paintings he brought from his cabin a large, battered portfolio of paintings and drawings; and he held them up, one by one, for my inspection and comments. To me this was a rare and almost overwhelming experience. Here were the "feverishly distorted visions" as seen by Klarkash-Ton himself!, drawn by his own hand and here that same hand was holding them up for me. I noted that many were time-yellowed and worn by handling, obviously dating back many years. Also scattered through the pile were original drawings by other artists illustrating Klarkash-Ton's stories and poems from WEIRD TALES. There were several by Virgil Finlay and two or three by Hugh Rankin.

Few of those who admire his literary work have ever seen a painting or drawing by Klarkash-Ton. Some will remember his drawings in the old WEIRD TALES, but many of the younger generation do not have access to these. His paintings in water colors, inks, and other media are unknown even to many collectors.

I have no idea how many paintings or drawings he produced over the years, nor do I think anyone else does. Certainly the figure runs well into the hundreds. I saw perhaps fifty in that portfolio when I first visited him. In past years he had sold some and given others to admirers. I am led to believe that the bulk of his artwork was produced in his earlier life -- in the twenties and thirties. All of the specimens I saw were old -- one painting, which I later bought, bore the date 1927.

Klarkash-Ton worked with a great variety of materials -- with water colors, inks, crayons, show-card colors, and oils. All of the paintings I saw were done on common drawing paper or on heavy board. If he ever used canvas I am not aware of it. A few were done on silk, satoon, or similar material, however.

In order to acquaint those interested, it might be of value if I try to describe those few I have in my own collection... but any evaluation or art criticism I will leave for those who are more qualified:

1. WORSHIP. A painting done with colored inks. Depicts a lizard-like creature, with a tail wrapped around a tree, groveling before a weird, green, horned creature seated on a pedistal. A high mountain scene with dead back sky, with huge, gold-colored boulders in the background, almost luminous and metallic. 8" X 11½".

2. HYPERBOREAN LANDSCAPE. A water color. A scene in the high mountains with red, willow-like trees, fantastic peaks and white clouds. Bears the date 1927 in one corner. 12" X 15".

3. SCENE IN ATLANTIS. Almost entirely done in green oils except for a few red seaweeds. A shadowy scene of weird, sunken buildings, statuary and marine monsters. The central figure is a sundial! 8½" X 12".

4. THE SCIAPODS. Two nude figures, male and female, of the sciapods of ancient Greek and also Hindu mythology. They are "upside down" with roots where their hair should be, and they shade themselves with their wide, loaf-like foot. The setting is a weird landscape with grotesque and multi-colored trees and shrubs. Show-card colors, 11" X 12½"

5. UNTITLED. A tiny drawing done with purple ink on drawing paper 2" X 3¢". A weird monster with a long neck and a hungry grin. On the back of the drawing is the date 1918. Klarkash-Ton sent this to George Sterling, who returned it.

6. GRYPHON GAZING ON THE GULF. A pen and ink drawing to illustrate Lovecraft's "The Lurking Fear" in HOME BREW in 1923. Depicts a gryphon with outspread wings gazing into a deep gulf with lightning striking from a huge black cloud. 4½ X 8 3/4ths". This is one of a set done by Klarkash-Ton and is one of the drawings not used. Lovecraft himself saw this drawing and liked it. In a letter to Klarkash-Ton, March 25, 1923, he says: "And the 'Lurking Fear' illustrations! I have already told you how the gryphon gazing on the gulf impressed me..."

Under his blue oak trees, laden with moss and mistletoe, while cicadas crackled in

the tall dried grasses and curious woods nearby, Klarkash-Ton read his poetry to me, intoning the verses in a low, haunting, somewhat droning voice. He had brought out a bulging manuscript file -- his working file for his projected SELECTED POEMS. The ones he selected to read to me were those he thought I would like, or were his own favorites I particularly recall the melancholy "The Old Water Wheel" and I remember thinking then that it was Klarkash-Ton's own voice "whose all-monotonous cadence haunts the air." He read "Calenture" and I realized then that it was here on this self-same spot that he had written it -- here among the grasses "...that bore the seed of the same grass on which (we) now recline(d)." He read, at my request, "Hellenic Sequel" and intoned the ever-haunting cadences of "Zothique." All of these had appeared in his Arkham House volume THE DARK CHATEAU two years before. I vividly recall his reading his lilting "Yerba Buena," long a favorite of mine. This is a pantoum, one of the rarest and most difficult forms of poetry, of ancient Malay origin. It had first appeared in the Winter, 1946, issue of WINGS, the little poetry magazine edited by Stanton A. Coblentz. Later, Klarkash-Ton was to record it for me on tape.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Klarkash-Ton's literary work is his tremendous vocabulary. It is, I think, without parallel in literature. I know of no other writer, dead or living, who has had at his command such an incredible, comprehensive vocabulary and the ability to so effectively use it. When I asked Klarkash-Ton how he had acquired such a remarkable vocabulary, he replied that when young he had simply gone through an unabridged dictionary from A to Z and had learned and studied all the words. Not only did he study and learn the spellings, meanings, and usages, but he also delved into the word origins; going back, in most cases, to the original Sanskrit. All this was on his own; his formal schooling had ended in the grammar grades. Likewise, he taught himself to read and write in both Spanish and French, mainly so that he could read and translate his favorite poets in those languages. His favorite French poets were, of course, Arthur Rimbaud and Charles Baudelaire. His translations of the latter appeared in his own SANDALWOOD, and, with those of others, in the Limited Editions Club edition of Baudelaire's FLOWERS OF EVIL in 1940.

Klarkash-Ton's poetry and prose are the purest distillations of the essence of fantasy, and there is a timeless quality about his fiction tales that is the hallmark of all classic fantasy. A hundred years from now we may be plying the trade lanes to Procyon or gawking at sights on Antares, but Klarkash-Ton's fantasy fiction tales will be as sought-after and enjoyed then as they are by his devotees today. So broad is his scope, so cosmic his concepts, so timelessly universal his visions, that it is certain his tales will long endure. While most of us in the fantasy world will remember his stories, his exotic and beautiful prose, or even his sculptures, his first love, and his last, was poetry. Klarkash-Ton would want to be remembered primarily as a poet.

Tributes to Klarkash-Ton during his lifetime were few, but those were marked with unbounded enthusiasm. He was, of course, highly revered and appreciated by most of his fellow writers in the fantasy field. Biographical details have been scanty and for most of those we must turn to the excellent article "Clark Ashton Smith: Master of Fantasy," by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei in their Arkham House collection of Klarkash-Ton's stories OUT OF SPACE AND TIME. There are other, briefer, details and evaluations on the dust-jackets of his other Arkham House books.

Concerning the poetry of Klarkash-Ton, perhaps no more glowing tribute will ever be penned than that by his revered early friend and mentor, George Sterling, himself a famous California poet and playright. On October 28, 1922, Sterling wrote the preface to Klarkash-Ton's most memorable collection of poetry, EBONY AND CRYSTAL, in which he said:

"Because he has lent himself the more innocently to the whispers of his subconscious daemon, and because he has set those murmurs to purer and harder crystal than we others,

by so much longer will the poems of Clark Ashton Smith endure. Here indeed is loot against the forays of moth and rust. Here we shall find none or little of the sentimental fat with which so much of our literature is larded. Rather shall one in Imagination's 'misty mid-region', see elfin rubies burn at his feet, witch-fires glow in the nearer cypresses, and feel upon his brow a wind from the unknown... But let him who is worthy by reason of his clear eye and unjaded heart wander across these borders of beauty and be glad."

In the ranks of amateur journalism, Stanley Mullen contributed perhaps the finest tribute to Klarkash-Ton in the July, 1947, issue of his excellent fantasy fan magazine, THE GORGON, Vol. 1, No. 3. His tribute was titled "Cartouche - Clark Ashton Smith." I have always liked his first paragraph and I hope he will not mind if I quote it here: "The Writings of Clark Ashton Smith have been compared to rich wines and rare old brandies— too strong for some tastes, to exotic for others -- but for the devotee of truly outré literature, there can be no finer vintage." This I quite concur with, but let the wine be a rare old Mavrodaphne -- no lesser nectar could quite suffice!

But it remained for his fellow "Master of Fantasy," the late H.P. Lovecraft, to express so eloquently and so adequately the distinguishing outré-ness, the unique weirdness, that is the special flavor of Klarkash-Ton's prose and poetry. Klarkash-Ton had sent, shortly after publication, a copy of his EBONY AND CRYSTAL to Lovecraft, who had replied to thank him for it, first by postcard in February, and then by letter on March 25, 1923. I borrowed that letter from Klarkash-Ton in April of 1954 and deciphered, with some difficulty, Lovecraft's spidery scrawl. I have that transcript, which comprised five pages of single-spaced typing, before me and I quote the pertinent remarks:

"But my card sent from Salem last month attempted in a feeble way to express the delirious delight and unboundedly enthusiastic admiration which EBONY AND CRYSTAL aroused in me. It is truly titanic -- it is a breath of divine and daemoniac beauty, horror, madness, and wonder which perfumed and pestilential night-winds have whirled through bat-thronged abysses of infinity and eldor time from dead cities and moon-accursed peaks of Saturn, Lemuria, and Uis. It is genius, if genius ever existed! As I have said before, there is no author but yourself who seems to have glimpsed fully those tenebrous wastes, immeasurable gulfs, grey toploss pinnacles, crumbling corpses of forgotten cities, slimy, stagnant, cypress-bordered rivers, and alien, indefinable, antiquity-ridden gardens of strange decay, with which my own dreams have been crowded since earliest childhood. I read your work as the record of the only other human eye which has seen the things I have seen in far planets."

In that letter Lovecraft was, of course, commenting on Klarkash-Ton's poetry, but his evaluation applies equally to his prose. The same eloquent enthusiasm was expressed later in H.P.L.'s fine essay SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE, in which he commented on Klarkash-Ton's prose tales. A portion of this tribute is quoted on the portrait of Klarkash-Ton to head this, my own tribute.

Klarkash-Ton, like Lovecraft, also had a "commonplace book," a notebook filled with his notes, suggestions for stories, plots, names, ideas, and all the other jottings he had made and saved over the years. In it are pages of odd and exotic names, lists of the carvings he had sold and to whom and for what prices. There are first drafts of poems, or single lines of poetry. Scattered through are epigrams, addresses of friends and correspondents, lists of paintings sold with names of buyers and prices paid. Klarkash-Ton called his notebook the "BLACK BOOK." It is evidently very old; he had used it all the major portion of his writing life and it was always at his side. It is a loose-leaf book with ruled pages 6 X 7 3/4ths inches in size. The cover is black, of limp, pebbled leather, with an inside pocket. It is worn and polished with handling over the years with the leather rubbed thin at the corners.

Most of the entries in the BLACK BOOK are impossible for anyone but Klarkash-Ton to read. Here is a display of an amazing variation of the handwriting of one man. Some of the entries are so plainly written that anyone could decipher them; but others, hurriedly scrawled, resemble nothing so much as Arabic shorthand!

I first saw the BLACK BOOK that day at the cabin, but on later visits I was to have the rare privilege of pouring through its pages. I have it now, on loan from his widow, before me as I write, and I have her kind permission to quote from it. Some of the more easily deciphered story ideas follow:

"A disabled space-ship of unmeltable metal, landing on an alien planet, and carried for an immense distance on a volcanic river of molten lava --"

"An old soldier who meets and rejoins the phantom army, wandering forever through lost lands, of his former captain and comrade."

"A strange, furtive, tattordemalian who is seen frequently in a certain locality. No one knows anything about him. Out of curiosity, one follows him and sees him melt and disappear mistily, diffused and dismembered into the features of a desolate landscape.

Few writers of fantasy-fiction ever had quite the flair for inventing names as had Klarkash-Ton. His names for places, things, titles of stories, or of the denizens of space and time, have a shudder-provoking quality about them that has seldom, if ever, been equaled. No devotee of his weird fiction will ever forget such provoking titles as "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis,""Necromancy in Naat," such places as "Averiogne" or "Zothique," such names as "Xoothra,""Tsathoggua," or "Vulthoom."

It would be interesting to list all the names and titles found in the BLACK BOOK, but lack of space permits but a few here. Most of the titles listed were later used in his stories, but here are a few: "Zanzenga, Milaab, Xaotura, Qualk, Zylac, Zabdamar, Uori, Mygou, Enoycla, Loyla, Pernox, Chronomazo, Prollantha."

An insight into Klarkash-Ton's estimate of his own fiction tales is found, written in his own scrawl, on one page of the BLACK BOOK. This is in one of the drafts he had jotted down for a proposed advertisement for THE DOUBLE SHADOW AND OTHER FANTASIES. He had written:"For lovers of weird atmosphere and imaginative writing. Poetic rather than plotty. Will not appeal to devotees of action."

Few know that Klarkash-Ton conducted a newspaper column in THE AUBURN JOURNAL over a period of years. This was a short column and consisted mostly of epigrams -- witty, wise, humerous, and philisophic. I have before me one yellowed clipping of a single "Clark Ashton Smith's Column." It bears no date but internal evidence suggests that it might have been printed in the late twenties or early thirties. The editors of that venerable journal write me: "Unfortunately, no one here now remembers when he wrote the column as it was so long ago. I will quote a few of his better epigrams from a tape recording made for me by Klarkash-Ton here in the "Vaults" on October 18, 1957. He selected and read them from the BLACK BOOK and the sounds of its crinkling pages can be heard in the background as he turned them.

"One may chase his tail around the globe a hundred times and not be an inch nearer to the center of the infinite and the eternal; a truth known to few occidentals."

"Communism: The apotheosis of the piss-ant."

"In art or literature, it is better to err on the side of over-flamboyance or exuberance than to prune everything down to a drab, dead, and flat level. The former vice is at least on the side of growth; the latter represses or even tends to extirpate all growth."

"Knowledge is often most concealed when most divulged; and happily none will harken if I whisper."

"Strange pleasures are known to him who flaunts the immarable purple of poetry before the color-blind."

"The true lover of mysteries is not likely to feel any lasting interest in detective stories. Not the least proof of Poe's genius is that he abandoned this genre of writing as soon as he had mastered it."

Klarkash-Ton had tried his hand at many literary forms. How many know he wrote a play? He wrote one, many years ago; a drama in one act and six scenes titled THE DEAD WILL CUCKOLD YOU. The play has never been published nor performed. The scenes are laid in Faraad, capital of Yoros, in Zothique. It is a play of necromancy done in blank verse in the best Smith style. There are some magnificent passages. In my opinion, some of his best and most colorful lines of poetry are here.

Klarkash-Ton and I often talked of his reading the play into my recorder with a background of low, suitable music. He wanted for background a wild, fantastic music, preferably something oriental. Finally he decided that some of the ragas performed on the sitar by Ravi Shankar, that incredible musician of India, were just what he wanted. It is regrettable that we never found the time nor the opportunity to do this recording.

Klarkash-Ton had a few carvings on hand in the cabin at the time of my visit. Avid collectors and admirers, both here and abroad, always kept his current stock of carvings at a minimum. August Derleth had purchased some on his recent visit, and another shipment had just been made to a purchaser in Copenhagen. I examined with great interest those few he did have, and I bought three to take home. There were a few discarded and broken specimens on a shelf by a window in the large room. One such remnant impressed and fascinated me -- the horned head of a faun. I asked Klarkash-Ton if he would carve another one just like it for me, and he did so by the following spring. It is perhaps the favorite piece in my collection. It is an impudent, leering face with a mocking grin and half-lidded eyes. The tongue protrudes slightly; the ears are pointed sharply and the two horns stand out above thick, curly hair. The whole head is light brown in color and was done in fired talc. The workmanship is superb and in fine detail. He reminds me of Coix, the faun immortalized by the late Eden Phillipotts in his THE GIRL AND THE FAUN.

Klarkash-Ton's carvings are distillations of fantasy frozen in imperishable stone; hence, they may last the longest of any of his works. The archaeologists of Zothique, digging in that latter day under a pallid and waning sun, will find twenty-seven of them in the ruins of Berkeley and they will be at a sore loss to place them in any category -- as indeed they would in any age. There has never been anything quite like them.

The materials for Klarkash-Ton's carvings were beautiful, rare rocks and minerals, searched out and picked up in the foothills near his old home in Auburn or in the hills near Carmel. Many came from great depths in the earth, from the tailings of old mines of the Mother Lode. His favorite material from the Carmel area, which he used in carving most of his later pieces, was what he called diatomite -- a white, chalky material he obtained from the thick vein in an old road bank.

Klarkash-Ton experimented with many materials but he naturally preferred those that were more easily worked such as talc or diatomite. These could be worked with a small knife. Other materials, such as lava or basalt, could be picked up almost anywhere; but these needed hammer and chisel. Regardless of his preferences, if the subject called for such harder materials he did not hesitate to use it.

The rough pieces if the soft talc or diatomite were blocked out roughly to some semblance of their final shape with the aid of a large jack-knife. The final finishing work was done with a small, rod-handled, pen-knife. On a very few specimens a further polishing was done with sandpaper or emery cloth. All of this work with talc or dia-

tomite entailed a great deal of dust. This necessitated working outside in the open air -- under his blue oak trees in Auburn or in his tiny, fern-ringed back patio in Pacific Grove.

Carvings in diatomite or talc needed firing to harden them. This was accomplished simply by placing the finished pieces, completely surrounded by dry sand, in an old tin can and placing the whole in a wood fire -- in the firebox of his Auburn cabin or in the fireplace at Pacific Grove in later years. Many pieces cracked or crumbled in the firing process and had to be discarded.

Firing brought out surprisingly beautiful and happy combinations of colors in such materials as diatomite and, to a lesser extent, talc. Many indeed for fortuitous combinations of hues -- but Klarkash-Ton never knew what they would look like before firing. One such piece in my own collection, "Dagon," the fish-god, has a pink nose and forehead, with delicate mauve shading on one side suggesting the shadows of great sea depths.

Each carving entailed many long hours of patient, intensive, painstaking labor and care, far overshadowing the value of the small prices Klarkash-Ton charged for them. Each is an original and unique work of art in itself and there were never any exact copies. Klarkash-Ton did, however, sometimes carve several versions of the same subject. There are several "Outsiders," for example. One such famous carving by that name is pictured on the dust jacket of BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP (Lovecraft). In the spring of 1954 he carved a similar one for me. Several others bear the title "Nameless Entity."

Many of those who possess Klarkash-Ton's carvings, or who have seen and examined them, will have noted, and been puzzled by, the curious letters inscribed on the flat bases. They are the letters "K" and "A" with the "K" backwards. This was his brand, or signature, and he signed most of his carvings with it -- except when he forgot to do so before firing. When I asked for an explanation he replied that in the ancient Etruscan alphabet the "K" backwards stood for either a "C" or an "K." In this case it stood for a "C," the signature being his initials, "C A" for Clark Ashton.

Klarkash-Ton's carvings are the static, frozen scenes of his visualized concepts. They are his "feverishly distorted visions" caught and held forever in stone. Inspiration for them came from many sources. Many depict the fabled gods and creatures of the "Cthulhu Mythos" of Lovecraft and his "Circle" or writers; others represent the figures of the classical mythologies of Greece, Rome, India, and of other ancient cultures. Still others were dredged from the depths of his own subconcious, from dreams.

What I have to relate here in connection with his inspiration from dreams many sound incredible, but it is true and it may give an insight into the mystical aspects of the man and the workings of his "Subconcious daemon." The first carving I bought from Klarkash-Ton, on that September afternoon in 1953, is one of his largest. It is fashioned from black lava or basalt, stands eight inches high, and is nearly five inches across at the base. It is the head of Ialdabaoth, the demiurge mentioned by Anatole France in THE REVOLT OF THE ANGELS. It was the first carving I saw that day at his cabin and it sat outside on the little wall of stones near the entrance. This is one of his earliest carvings, perhaps his very earliest. He told me that he had carved it about nine or ten years before and that it had stood outside on the wall ever since. It had been outside so long, exposed to the elements, that orange lichens had begun to form in blotches about the head, and larger patches of gray lichens had begun to creep over the rest of the frowning visage. The lichens, dormant now in the dry air of my library case, are still there.

It is a stern and frowning visage with a rounded, bald, head; the eyes are large and

staring; the nose is flat with flaring nostrils; the mouth is open as if speaking The Word; the pointed beard below the mouth is formed by horizontal lines. The whole aspect of the carving suggests something Mayan, Polynesian, or ancient Sumerian. It well could have been dug from the ruins of Sumer or recovered from the tangled vines of Nuku hiva.

Here is the coincidence, so startling as to be almost unbelievable: there is a photograph, an almost perfect likeness of Klarkash-Ton's carving, in AKU-AKU, Thor Heyerdahl book on Easter Island, published in 1958. It can be found in the lower left hand corner of the double-page spread following page 304 of the hardbound edition. It is included with other photographs of carvings in hard lava rocks; carvings which were discovered in secret family caves on the island and which were completely unknown except to their owners until Heyerdahl brought them to light in 1956. Remember, Klarkash-Ton's carving was executed at least fifteen years before...

The resemblance between the two carvings -- Ialdabaoth and the Easter Island piece -- is astonishing. There is the same rounded head, the same eyes, nose, and mouth. The Easter Island piece shows long ears, but there is a suggestion of long ears on Ialdabaoth, as if they had been there but had been broken off or chipped away. They are done in the same material; only the beard is different. Klarkash-Ton's is formed by horizontal lines, the other with vertical lines. However, Klarkash-Ton stated that he had often used vertical lines in depicting beards on other carvings.

When I pointed out, in 1958, the strange coincidence to Klarkash-Ton, and accused him jokingly of having worked secretly on Easter Island, he said that about the time he had carved Ialdabaoth, long years before, he had had a series of vivid, recurring dreams -- dreams in which he found himself way underground in small caves which were filled with hundreds of small carvings in stone!

Students of Klarkash-Ton's sculptures will be quite startled if they compare them with other stone figures from the secret caves of Easter Island. On that same double-page spread in AKU-AKU, but in the lower right hand corner, there appears the weird profile of a head. There is an amazing resemblance between this and another of Klarkash-Ton's in my collection called "The Nameless One." This, too, is one of his earlier efforts, roughly executed with bold-stroked lines.

So much of interest happened on that day long ago that I find it difficult to recall all that transpired. But I do remember the afternoon hours passed all too quickly. The shadows lengthened and a light breeze rustled the leaves of the blue oaks. At length Klarkash-Ton suggested that it might be cool enough to go inside and examine his library and to look over his letters from Lovecraft.

It is said that to look at a man's library is to know the man, so I was interested in examining Klarkash-Ton's. There were many hundreds of books, many old, many rare, many collector's items. It was obvious, however, that the library had been selected with care; this was no ordinary collection of books; this was the library of a scholar. The bulk of the library consisted of the standard classics of prose and poetry, of histories, of the mythologies of Greece and Rome, India, and other ancient cultures. There were volumes on witchcraft, and I saw first editions of all those by Montague Summers including his two books on vampires. There were many volumes of poetry, classic and modern, and of the latter many were personal presentations inscribed by the authors. Klarkash-Ton pointed out what was perhaps a complete set, mostly first editions, of the works of Lafcadio Hearn and expressed his appreciation of Hearn's colorful and exotic prose. Later I was to borrow this set at Klarkash-Ton's prodding and become another Hearn devotee.

There were many volumes of fantasy and science fiction -- mostly collections or anthologies -- and many were copies signed by the authors and inscribed with sentiments of appreciation to Klarkash-Ton. Many were Arkham House books but missing were THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS and BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP. Later I was to learn that he had been forced to sell them to raise money for expenses, chosing them because of their great value. This was a working library -- not a collector's collection of volumes hoarded in pristine condition -- those books bespoke use. Every book, and all of the innumerable magazines, showed signs of having been read many times; each was well-thumbed, some slightly battered, and all dust-covered. This was the library of a man well-grounded in the ancient mythologies and histories of the ancient world; in art, literature, in fantasy of all forms from Poe to Matheson. Here was a well-rounded collection of the macabre, the weird, the unusual, the exotic in both prose and poetry.

There were copies, of course, of all of his own published works, and it was here for the first time that I saw and handled a copy of the fabulous SANDALWOOD. I have this copy before me now, on loan from Mrs. Smith. It is dirty and battered and worn from much use over the years. Both covers are separate, torn from the spine. Inside are innumerable changes in his handwriting -- some in pencil, some in ink. There are deletions, additions, corrections, and changes; most of them are quite indéciphorable to one not used to his handwriting. In many cases whole verses were rewritten and added in the margins. This is copy #3 of the 250 copy edition of October, 1925. This was always Klarkash-Ton's own copy, a fabulous treasure beyond price.

Klarkash-Ton kept the Lovecraft letters in a paper carton, and there were perhaps 150 to 200 of them. He brought them out, dusted them off, and allowed me to examine them, which I did with great interest. Later I was to have the time to look them over more thoroughly and read many of them. There were postcards, too, and it has often been said that Lovecraft could get more on a postcard than most people could get on a lengthy letter. I remember one card on which HPL commented on "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis." The correspondence between Lovecraft and Klarkash-Ton covered many years; it started when both were just beginning to seriously experiment with fiction tales and it endured all through the years until Lovecraft's death in 1937 of cancer.

What matter what Klarkash-Ton was like; what matter the day-by-day details of his life, the facts and figures of his existance? These are interesting but unimportant. What is important is that he was CLARK ASHTON SMITH, one of the immortals. There have been few his equal since Hyperborea and I see him marching forward towards Zothique with "the wind from between the worlds" in his face, and I am glad he paused here briefly and that I knew him for a little while.

But of course I made estimate of Klarkash-Ton as a man, as a person, that day at the cabin, and my estimate of him never had cause nor reason to be revised. I saw that here was a gentleman in the very real sense of the term; he was, as they say, a gentleman of the old school. He was quiet, dignified, polite, and the impression he gave was that of the highest culture. But this was not an obvious, studied, or cultivated pose. He was perfectly and flawlessly natural -- the highest type of civilized man. He was, and I think it well to put it as plainly, as bluntly, as simply as possible, a truly good man -- you felt it, you knew it whenever you were with him. You could not possibly imagine him doing or thinking harm to anyone.

Let me hasten to add that I do not wish to leave the impression or imply that Klarkash-Ton was a Saint, lest I incur and deserve the wrath and awful curses of Tsathoggua. He was a human being; he had lived and loved and indulged in many of the "frailties" of human nature. He drank, sometimes too much; he smoked both pipe and cigarettes. He had, of course, a deeply sensitive nature. He could be deeply hurt and he could become very angry. However, I do not remember ever seeing him give way to any noticeable display of

emotions. On the whole he exuded an almost Buddha-like serenity.

As for Klarkash-Ton's religion or philisophic leanings, he was, if he could be called anything, a Buddhist, but even that is a limiting term. Early in our acquaintance I had sent him my copy of Robert Payne's incredibly beautiful prose-poem on the life of Buddha, THE LORD COMES (American edition titled The Yellow Robe). He wrote me, on March 5, 1954: "Thanks so much for the loan of THE YELLOW ROBE (I think I prefer the English title). I read the book with so much interest that it set me to rereading all that I have on the life and doctrines of Buddha, as well as some stuff on Brahmanism and East Indian mythology. The book is beautifully written and I liked especially some of the passages you specified." Later, when I sent copies of books by Alan W. Watts, the great exponent of Zen, Klarkash-Ton replied: "By belated thanks for THE WISDOM OF INSECURITY, which expresses the philosophy toward which I have been tending a long time past." His philisophy is expressed, too, in his own poetry, and there are flashes of Zen everywhere. Perhaps the poem "Thebiad" in SPELLS AND PHILTRES best expresses his impatience with code, creed, or cult; and here too, one glimpses that ineffable loneliness of one who has gone far. This is not a poem of fantasy, but the expression of an experience.

Now that I stop to think about it we seldom, if ever, discussed anything very seriously. I shall always remember a hike we had, in a later year, over the hills near Carmel. We were alone together for about two hours and we didn't talk much. We just hiked along the dusty road, admired the views over the mountains, stopped often to examine curious plants, and we even picked a bouquet of wildlings to take home for his desk. We picked wild flowers, dried grasses, and rather old and grotesque woods --he loved such things. We stopped at a large patch of the real poison hemlock, Conium Maculatum, a European plant now gone wild in California, and whose juice had been quaffed by Socrates. Klarkash-Ton, appropriately enough, willingly posed in the midst of the tall stalks so that I could take color pictures. We talked little, merely calling each other's attention to this or that odd wood or curious sight, but it was then that I sensed fully that he was aware of everything. I learned more about the man on that hike than in all our previous visits.

The wild gardens of nature were the real gardens to him. At that time, although not really well enough or strong enough, he was trying to help earn a living doing gardening work on the Monterey Peninsula and he hated it. It was about that time too, that he wrote "The Tired Gardener" (SPELLS AND PHILTRES, p. 7) and I shall always like to think our hike through wild gardens that day had something to do with it or some inspiration for it, I treasure a copy of that poem he typed and sent me shortly thereafter -- long before it was published.

Klarkash-Ton's was a Fortean mind, ever questing, never denying. He was intensely interested in the unexplained, the unknown. I remember our discussing THE BOOKS OF CHARLES FORT and our discussion naturally turned to UFOs, the "flying saucers." Klarkash-Ton had seen one -- had seen something -- a year or two before. It was on a hot night and he had been lying outside on his sleeping bag gazing upwards into the depths of space. Suddenly he became aware of a large object, like an indistinct shadow, darker than the night, passing slowly above him blotting out the stars.

The shadows outside were lengthening outside of the cabin when we checked the time on his old kitchen clock. Klarkash-Ton and I decided to have dinner at some cafe of his choosing in Auburn, but first we paused outside so that I could take some pictures of him with a rented camera I had brought along. Klarkash-Ton posed, rather stiffly, with his coat over his arm, against the lichen-blotched stones of his low wall with one of his blue oaks in the background.

We strolled slowly along on that trek into town, still talking, and Klarkash-Ton kept pointing out items of interest along the way. They were all sights he had known and loved for a lifetime; there was an old orchard, beautiful with changing seasons; there - an interesting rock; here, a gnarled tree with branches like reaching and clutching hands. He pointed out the spot where, years before, there had existed an old water wheel -- the one he described in his poem. Along this very road, then, Klarkash-Ton had trudged homeward as a youth with the "dolent, drear, complaining note" ever haunting the air and dogging his footsteps.

We had now entered the outskirts of Auburn itself and we stopped to examine the "haunted" house he had used in his story "The Devotee of Evil." Across the street it was, on a little hill, and it stood at the end of a long walkway bordered with tangled vines and shrubs. It was an ancient house, half hidden by tall trees, and it did have a sinister air about it. Klarkash-Ton said that he didn't know whether it was haunted or not, but that was its reputation.

Auburn is situated in the heart of the famous Mother Lode mining area and the old, original section, Lower Auburn, dates back to the earliest days of the Gold Rush. Many of the old buildings, built of brick, masonry, or of weathered boards, are still in excellent condition and in use. We stopped at one, in the lower floor of which was a small grocery operated by a Chinese. Klarkash-Ton bought some cigarettes and introduced me to the proprietor as a "good friend" who had come "all the way from Berkeley" to visit him.

We dined together at a small cafe just across the highway from the ancient firehouse As we looked over the menu trying to decide what to order I said, trying to be facetious, "Being a Lovecraft fan, I suppose I shouldn't order any seafood." Klarkash-Ton quickly came back with "Well, I'm a Lovecraft fan too, but I don't carry it quite that far.I'm going to order fried prawns." And he did.

Dusk was gathering as we strolled along the upward-leading streets toward the bus station, but it was still light enough for Klarkash-Ton to point out interesting old houses and curious plants along the way. He showed me the first cupo-myrtle trees I had ever seen.

On a later visit Klarkash-Ton was to show me, in the garden of vacationing friends of his, where he had gone so that he could do needed watering, a clump of the rare and graceful black bamboo. The culms are indeed black -- as black as india ink -- but it takes a year before they turn fully black from the initial vivid green. At one stage of their development the stems are mottled, flecked with brown , resembling the skins of certain reptiles. Klarkash-Ton had cut some at this stage to use as stems to the few grotesquely-carved stone pipes he had once fashioned.

Since we still had a little time before my bus left for Berkeley, we entered a combination pool-hall, bar, and newsstand. We paused at the magazine racks and looked over the science-fiction and fantasy magazines and complained that the current offerings were not like they were in the old days. Klarkash-Ton bought beers for us and introduced me to the bartender, an old friend of his. Here, again, he introduced me as a good friend and stressed the fact that I had come all the way from Berkeley just to see him. The bartender ordered another copy of THE DARK CHATEAU, which he wanted to send to a friend.

The time came for my departure but when we arrived at the bus station we learned that the bus was to be late. We sat on a bench outside and passed the little time we had left, promising to write and agreeing to exchange more visits in the future. At

length the bus came and it was crowded, but I found a seat in the rear. As we pulled away slowly I looked out the window and could barely make out the figure of Clark Ashton Smith waving good-bye in the gathering gloom.....

.....George F. Haas

THE OLD WATER-WHEEL
by Clark Ashton Smith *

Often, on homeward ways, I come
To a deserted orchard, old and lone,
Unplowed, untrod, with wildling grasses grown
Through rows of pear and plum.

There, in a never-ceasing round,
In the slow stream, by noon, by night, by dawn,
An ancient, hidden water-wheel turns on
With a sad reiterant sound.

Most eerily it comes and dies,
And comes again, while on the horizon's breast
The ruby of Antares seems to rest,
Fallen from star-fraught skies:

A dolent, drear, complaining note
Whose all-monotonous cadence haunts the air
Like the recurrent moan of a despair
Some heart has learned by rote;

Heavy, and ill to hear, for one
Within whose breast, today, tonight, tomorrow,
Like the old wheel, an ancient, darkling sorrow,
Turns and is never done.

* Quotations of Clark Ashton Smith in the previous article are by permission of Mrs. Clark Ashton Smith. "The Old Water-Wheel" is reprinted from THE DARK CHATEAU, p. 30, by the permission of Arkham House and the estate of Clark Ashton Smith; poem copyright © 1951 by Clark Ashton Smith.

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(in order of publication)

THE CARNELIAN CUBE, by L. Sprague DeCamp and Fletcher Pratt	1948
THE PORCELAIN MAGICIAN, by Frank Owen	1948
PATTERN FOR CONQUEST, by George O. Smith	1949
SIXTH COLUMN, by Robert A. Heinlein	1949
THE 31st OF FEBRUARY, by Nelson Bond	1949
THE CASTLE OF IRON, by L. Sprague deCamp and Fletcher Pratt	1950
TYPEWRITER IN THE SKY (w/FEAR), by L. Ron Hubbard	1950
I, ROBOT, by Isaac Asimov	1950
MINNIONS OF THE MOON, by William G. Beyer	1950
CONAN THE CONQUEROR, by Robert E. Howard	1950
COSMIT ENGINEERS, by Clifford D. Simak	1950
MEN AGAINST THE STARS (anthology), edited by Martin Greenberg	1950
RENAISSANCE, by Raymond F. Jones	1951
SEETEE SHIP, by Will Stewart (pseud. for Jack Williamson)	1951
FOUNDATION, by Isaac Asimov	1951
THE FAIRY CHESSMEN (and TOMORROW AND TOMORROW), by Lewis Padgett	1951
TRAVELERS OF SPACE (anthology), edited by Martin Greenberg	1951
JOURNEY TO INFINITY(anthology), edited by Martin Greenberg	1951
FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE, by Isaac Asimov	1952
THE STARMEN, by Leigh Brackett	1952
JUDGMENT NIGHT, by C.L. Moore	1952
ROBOTS HAVE NO TAILS, by Lewis Padgett	1952
THE SWORD OF CONAN, by Robert E. Howard	1952
CITY, by Clifford D. Simak	1952
THE MIXED MEN, by A.E. Van Vogt	1952
SANDS OF MARS, by Arthur C. Clarke	1952
FIVE SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS (anthology), edited by Martin Greenberg	1952
ICEWORLD, by Hal Clemet	1953
CHILDREN OF THE ATOM, by Wilmar H. Shiras	1953
SECOND FOUNDATION, by Isaac Asimov	1953

SPACE LAWYER, by Nat Schachner 1953
SHAMBLEAU, by C.L. Moore 1953
MUTANT, by Lewis Padgett 1953
THE COMING OF CONAN, by Robert E. Howard 1953
KING CONAN, by Robert E. Howard 1953
COMPLETE BOOK OF OUTER SPACE, Willy Ley (non-fiction) 1953
AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT, by Arthur C. Clarke 1953
THE ROBOT AND THE MAN, (anthology), edited by Martin Greenberg 1953
MEL OLIVER AND SPACE ROVER ON MARS, by William Morrison 1954
THE FORGOTTEN PLANET, by Murray Leinster 1954
NORTHWEST OF EARTH, by C.L. Moore 1954
CONAN THE BARBARIAN, by Robert E. Howard 1954
PRELUDE TO SPACE, by Arthur C. Clarke 1954
UNDERSEA QUEST, by Fred Pohl and Jack Williamson 1954
LOST CONTINENTS, by L. Sprague deCamp (non-fiction) 1954
ADDRESS: CENTAURI, by F.L. Wallace 1955
SCIENCE FICTION TERROR TALES, (anthology), edited by Groff Conklin 1955
SARGASSO OF SPACE, by Andrew North 1955
TALES OF CONAN, by Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague DeCamp 1955
STAR BRIDGE, by Jack Williamson and James E. Gunn 1955
ALL ABOUT THE FUTURE (anthology) edited by Martin Greenberg 1955
REPRIEVE FROM PARADISE, by H. Chandler Elliott 1955
THIS FORTRESS WORLD, by James E. Gunn 1955
PLAGUE SHIP, by Andrew North 1956
UNDERSEA FLEET, by Fred Pohl and Jack Williamson 1956
HIGHWAYS IN HIDING, by George O. Smith 1956
INTERPLANETARY HUNTER, by Arthur K. Barnes 1956
SF '56: THE YEAR'S GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY (anthlgy)ed. by Judith Merril 1956
THE SEEDLING STARS, by James Blish 1957
COLONIAL SURVEY, by Murray Leinster 1957
RETURN OF CONAN, by Bjorn Nyborg and L. Sprague doCamp 1957
COMING ATTRACTIONS, (anthology - non-fiction), edited by Martin Greenberg 1957
THE SHROUDED PLANET, by Robert Randall (Robert Silverberg & Randall Garrett) 1957
EARTHMAN'S BURDEN, by Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson 1957
THEY'D RATHER BE RIGHT, by Mark Clifton and Frank Riley 1957
TWO SOUGHT ADVENTURE, by Fritz Leiber, Mr. 1957
SF '57: THE YEARS GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY (anthology) ed. by Judith Merril 1957
THE SURVIVORS, by Tom Goodwin 1958
METHUSELAH'S CHILDREN, by Robert A. Heinlein 1958
UNDERSEA CITY, by Fred Pohl and Jack Williamson 1958
STARMAN'S QUEST, by Robert Silverberg 1958
SF '58: THE YEAR'S GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY (anthology)ed. by Judith Merril 1958
THE DAWNING LIGHT, by Robert Randall (Robert Silverberg & Randall Garrett) 1959
PATH OF UNREASON, by George O. Smith 1959
SF:'59: THE YEAR'S GREATEST SF AND FANTASY (anthology) edited by Judith Merril 1959
AGENT OF VEGA, by James H. Schmitz 1960
TROS OF SAMOTHRACE, by Talbot Munday 1960
THE VORTEX BLASTER, by E.E. Smith, Ph.D. 1960
THE PURPLE PIRATE, by Talbot Munday 1960
THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JOHNATHAN HOAG, by Robert A. Heinlein 1960
THE MENACE FROM EARTH, by Robert A. Heinlein 1960
INVADERS FROM THE INFINITE, by John W. Campbell, Jr. 1961

THE BIRD OF TIME, by Wallace West	1960
DRUNKARD'S WALK, by Frederick Pohl	1961
THE PHILISOPHICAL CORPS., by E.B. Cole	1962
GRAY LENSMAN, by E.E. Smith, Ph.D.	1962
THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH, by Robert A. Heinlein (new edition)	1962
THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON, by Robert A. Heinlein (new edition)	1962
REVOLT IN 2100, by Robert A. Heinlein (new edition)	1962
THE ENDLESS FRONTIER, by Robert A. Heinlein	1962

....Martin Greenberg

OVER THE EDGE (continued from page 7)

CONDITIONS FOR UTOPIA

I was quite startled by a Mack Reynolds novelette about a year back, in which the American in Moscow seeks and finds the Russian Underground, only to find that it is as anti-capitalism as it is anti-communism. "We don't want your system —" one of the leaders says, "it has just as many faults as ours." How true. But why not our system? We live better under it than they do under Communism. We have individual freedom here. Why not? The faults are on a bureaucratic level, not on the level of the common man. There is unhappiness here; there is a bit more unhappiness in Russia. Yet...this leader doesn't want capitalism, despite its better conditions for the working man, simply because we have dirty politics at times. Is this leader seeking to improve, or is he seeking a Utopia, and will he accept anything less? I doubt the latter. But who wants Utopia? Who needs it? Will we be better or will we be the worse for it? I believe that Utopia would be the fatal blow to the human race. It would involve joyful stagnation. We need misery -- for misery is the challenge of life. If there were no unhappiness or tension on this planet, if it were a true Utopia, then I think it'd be time for me to play Russian Roulette with all chambers full. It would be one hell of a dull place -- and therefore not really a Utopia at all.

And is Utopia possible? Not unless we develop telepathy, and develop it to such a point that all the peoples of the Earth have one mass mind. Individual personalities are insatable. Human beings are human beings primarily because they are unpredictable — it's fun to see just what they are going to do next. Destroy individuality and you destroy humanity as we know it -- humanity as we, in general, want it. But you must completely destroy individuality to achieve Utopia...or else build three billion separate and distinct Utopias for each soul on the planet.

The Russian leader rejects any social improvements except the ultimate, and impossible, social improvement. In this way he is defeating his own purpose, since, while Utopias make nice dreams, they make nightmarish realities, and he will find his own lot absorbed by the New Class -- for no one can wait an infinity, even to achieve an impossibility.

.....Jack L. Chalker

THE ANTHEM CHAPBOOKS

A FIGMENT OF A DREAM, elsewhere mentioned, and a great buy at $2.00. Ready probably in late June or early July, 1962. $2.00.

MIRAGE ON LOVECRAFT, edited by Jack L. Chalker. A British chapbook, produced by Alan Dodd, containing: Autobiography: Some Notes on a Nonentity, by H.P. Lovecraft, in its first appearance anywhere outside of BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP/ The White Ship, by H.P. Lovecraft/ Notes on Lovecraft, by David H. Keller, M.D./A Rebuttal to Lovecraft Criticism, by August W. Derleth. Small edition. WITH MIRAGE SUBSCRIPTION (no trades!): 50¢. WITHOUT MIRAGE SUBSCRIPTION: $1 the copy. With a cover by Prosser. To be published in England in July.

IN MEMORIAM: CLARK ASHTON SMITH. Memoriams, Smith story & poetry reprints, critiques, short bibliography. 52 / pages, scheduled for September, 1962. $2.00 pre-publication.

THOMAS B. HAUGHEY (pronounced 'Hoy') is a fellow WSFA member, a student at the University of Maryland, a fanzine editor (MIRTH AND IRONY, which "Mirage" readers should like, and which will shortly feature material -- fiction -- by yours truly), and the only person I know who would've gladly slept on the bar at the Phillycon. Almost cherub-like in person, his excellent poems show a hidden pessimism. Still, they are filled with power; I predict that, as a poet, he'll go far.

THIS USUFRUCT MORTUARY

(This Usufruct Mortuary, ctd)

A blighted black eagle's feather
Tossed by the wind,
Proclaims with forboding
Of those who have sinned.

The mighty are falling
In a dull flake-stone manner,
Dull, gastly blotches --
A shroud, not a banner

Flaming eye still raging,
Eagle soars on unaware
That the fire is slowly fading
From its blankly wrathful stare.

Wings beat out furiously,
Then contemptuously ride the crest.
In sunlight splattered talons flash
Red from a rabbit's breast.

To countless heights of gore and glory
The red-eyed spectre flies
Grating all of peaceful nature
With its harsh, triumphant cries.

One by one the feathers fall;
Little by little the eyes grow cold.
Yet more and more the claws strike out;
More and more the cries ring bold.

One by one the feathers fall,
It's nature's whole affair.
One by one black feathers fall,
Owner blissful, unaware.

And then at last a chill seeps through
The angry, staring eyes.
The blankness lifts and self is known
At the instant of demise.

Bereft of pride, bare of plume;
A used-up missle falls to doom.

Remembered sneers at his domain
Now conjured forth but searing pain:
A terror cruel of cruelness vain,
The knowledge of a sensuous brain --
Then nothing.

Nothing left but eagle feathers
Rotting in the dust.
Nothing more than black blotches,
A monument to lust.

Relieved silence fills the air;
Then Nature shows a golden ray,
Yet mourns and sighs through leafy flute
Sick at the thought of the bird of prey,
And the prayer he might have lived....

MISSLE WAR

A shimmer beam of waver light,
A heavy form beholds the night.
A silver, black, bold coffin glare
Dimly seem above the flare.

The earth is shrinking,
Sun is nigh.
Son of Ordin
Blights the sky.

Darkness here and dark shall fall.
Tongues of disaster shall forth call
a note. A note shall buildings crush:
A trill, a scream, the caps turn slush.

The bat, the vulture, crew of doom,
Ventures near the half-full moon.
Dead alive in lifeless void,
Magic hammer tense deployed.

Rukh and mammoth up doth ply,
Half-blind hornet's stings to try
Quiet rolls the rumble not,
Chariot rattles unforgot.

A flicker shadow larger comes.
The thing the sun its mocker shuns.
A scream, a moan, a shriek delight,
Aesir's champion to the fight --
Then thunder.

The walls are gone, the sound no more;
The world is now as in days of yore.
The gods are gone, the sun's at rest;
A heathen shine the world has blessed
trumpet fire at peace.

/the following is doubtlessly far from complete, and any additions would be welcome/

----------HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

POETIC TRIBUTES

a tentative bibliography, compiled
and edited by
JOHN E. VETTER

* * *

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H.P.L.
ANNIVERSARY
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ELEGY: IN PROVIDENCE IN THE SPRING. . . — Hawk on the Wind (1938)
Marginalia (1944)

PROVIDENCE: TWO GENTLEMEN MEET AT MIDNIGHT — Arkham Sampler, Autumn, 1948
Something About Cats (1949)

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Kuttner, Henry
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Morse, Richard Ely
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Marginalia (1944)

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Singleton, Earl
ON H.P. LOVECRAFT'S "THE FESTIVAL" — Bizarre, January, 1941

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Starrett, Vincent
HPL — Something About Cats (1949)

* * *

Stefanile, Felix
HOMAGE TO H.P. LOVECRAFT — A Houyhnhnm's Scrapbook, August, 1956; The Shuttered Room (1959)

* * *

Smith, Clark Ashton
H.P.L. — The Shuttered Room (1959)
TO HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT — Weird Tales, July, 1937; Marginalia (1944)

* * *

Vetter, John E.
AT LOVECRAFT'S GRAVE — Macabre, Winter, 1961-62

* * *

White, Charles E.
FOR THE OUTSIDER: H.P. LOVECRAFT — Marginalia (1944)

THE WITCH OF SHERWOOD FOREST

Is this the Schwarzwald's hexerei,
This spell you've put on me?
A love charm of the gypsy art,
or Pharoah's sorcery?

A longing for you tortures me,
I ache for your embrace;
At night my dreams are haunted by
Your pretty elfin face.

Yet still I'm sure your magic's not
An evil necromancy;
For with more joy than agony
You captivate my fancy.

So be you maid or Lamia —
How can a mortal tell?
I only know I'll be content,
A victim of your spell.

.....John E. Vetter.....

MIRTH AND IRONY, out shortly, promises to be an excellent addition to the growing number of sercon fanzines now in the fan world. MIRAGE readers will like it; it's not comedy, despite its title. 25¢ should put you on the mailing list. Thomas B. Haughey, 4211 - 71 Avenue, Landover Hills, Maryland.



Editorial commentary follows at letter's end. Comments denoted by a bracked number((0)).

ALFRED McCOY ANDREWS:

Thanks ever so much for the excellent copy of MIRAGE #4. I hope you won't mind if I make my comments brief concerning most of the issue, for I found the letterool triggered a lot of thoughts in my mind and I should like to spend most of my oomments in that department. But first the features in general:

The Prosser oover and the history of its theme or inspiration was nicely paired and the two were quite interesting, respectively, and as a whole.

The four stories were interesting, though not outstanding((1)). fmz fiction seldom is. But it was quite readable, and not too gawky in structure as so much fan fiction is today...or yesterday...and the day before that.

"Myths and Legends" was brief and gives the feeling that the material, for the most part, was merely copied from some source -- a book on the subject of mythology,perhaps. (I plead Mr. Anderson's forgiveness if I've wronged him).((2)). But since I have an interest in ancient religions, I enjoyed the piece.

Naturally Derleth would defend Lovecraft and his writings, but not having read the initial article by Dr. Keller I can't take sides... Although I am not particularly devoted to the work of HPL in the first place.(I'm sorry, Cthulhu old boy, but that's the way it goes...)

Poems by Wagner has some very nice imagery, but as a whole didn't prove too satisfying.to me personally, although I don't know quite why. I am not necessarily enslaved to rhyme, so I can appreciate prose-poetry, but while strong in imagry, the poems failed by lack of content, or "message," I believe.

Dodd's discussion of the Poe book was fascinating. Alan has a way of always being interesting. ((3)).

And now to the lettercol: Let me say at the outset that I am coming in to watch this fight at about Round 3, because I haven't read Deckinger's story, but I understand that it carried the idea that Jesus was a bastard and appeared as a "Xmas story" in YANDRO. (I read a later issue of YANDRO in which it was being "discussed" -- ho ho ho). And to handicap me further, this is the first issue of MIRAGE (#4, that is) that I have received. One may wonder if I am thusly handicapped, why I don't "play it smart" and keep my yap shut. Well, I may rue the day that I didn't, but while I will touch on Deckinger's little tale, I am spurred to comment more on a number of statements in #4's

"Hindsight."

Jack, in your opening remarks in the lettercol you say that you are for a certain amount of censorship in fmzs by their editors; then you claim that the no-censorship group is trying to deny you the right of no-censorship in your own zine. While I can appreciatotthe merit of your complaint (to some extent), I think that you will find yourself facing a problem of personal ethics, and that is this: if you are for editorial censorship, then you must set the example yourself by applying that censorship to your own 'zine; not only in contributed material from other sources, but in your editorials and comments in the lettercol. When you are galled by others, you can fire back in anger insult-for-insult, BUT if you do, you belie your stand on your principle of censorship and can not demand it from others. I know it is a tough tussle, but the old adage still stands: "You can't have your cake and eat it too." ((4)).

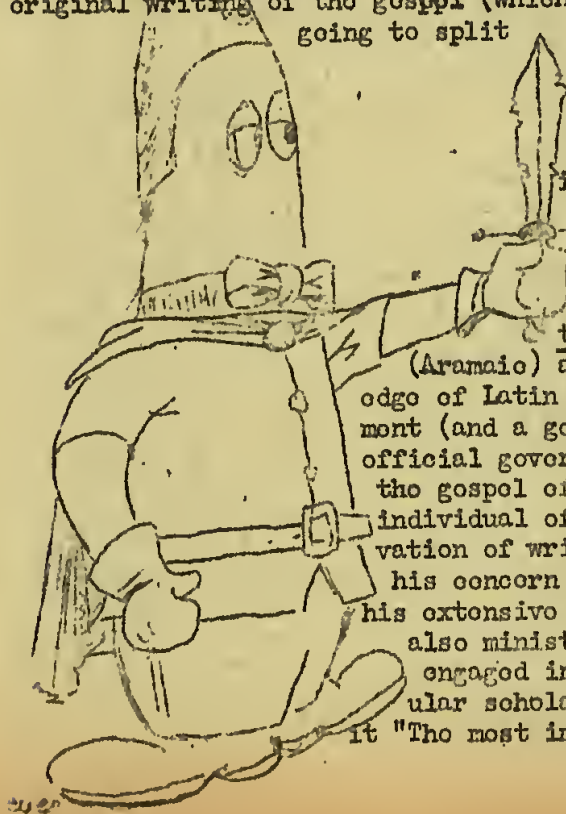
In re: your comments to Ted Pauls... I didn't get MIR3, so can not know the case of your editorial as to emotion or logic in context, but you accuse Dockinger of having "no respect for the beliefs of others inhabiting the same world in which he lives."Jack, considering the fact that Dockinger has proclaimed he is an athoist in letters, print, and word of mouth (and, I believe, his avowment), did you expect him to have any respect for the beliefs of others? I don't know to what extent Dockinger alligns his thinking with the leading athoist publications (FREETHOUGHT, PROGRESSIVE WORLD, etc.),but they show the same lack of respect by continually carping at the BIBLE, Christianity, Jews, and Negroes (they are on the race kick now). So if Dockinger follows the party-line of emotional drum-beating in the name of Reason (and they do get emotional) and makes a fetish of trouncing the beliefs of others, why did you expect him to give any consideration to the religious beliefs of other people? I've read some of his athoist-slanted stuff, but his lack of respect for the beliefs of others didn't get me churned up, because I didn't expect any such respect from him. I don't expect cows to fly,either -- they aren't equipped for it. Neither is Dockinger equipped to show any consideration or respect for people's religious beliefs. To be quite frank, the only dislike I have for Dockinger's material (what of it I've read) is that it is so poorly written.

As to your remarks (still in Paul's letter) of the difference between "judgment" and "opinionating;" yes, there is a difference.But in circumstances of heat and stress it can be difficult to distinguish between the two. As a Christian (if you are) you have no right to "sit in the judgment seat," but you do have the right (as an intelligent and thoughtful person) to have opinions. Particularly when you put your views into speech or print, you bring out the sharp definition of judgment and opinionating. It is a matter of phrasing. The characteristic of phrasing "judgments" (especially of condemnation) is heavy-handed, dictatorial dogmatism. While the phrasing of an opinion is characterized by thoughtfullness (carefully thought out), sincerity, reasonableness, and consideration of the opposing one's belief -- or disbelief. Let me give you an example. Whenever you express an opinion to which there is opposition, you are actually engaging in the art of argumentation... and a little study will show that legitimate "arguments" are not sessions of screaming and yelling at one another. Now, in my religious beliefs I do not hold with the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the human soul and let's suppose the matter comes up in talking or discussing things of a religious nature. Now I could "judge" my opponent as a stupid, damn idiot and try to beat him over the head with insults, sarcasm, and fury. But to express an opinion (as opposed to a condemning judgment) I would have to be sure I had thoroughly thought out my case (thoughtfulness), be sure that I am quite sincere in my stand (sincerity),apply reason and evidence to the case (reasonableness) and be willing to consider the merit or points of my opponent's argument or opinion(consideration). And, Jack, I must say (though you may not like me for it) that your bringing in "judgement" vs. "opinionating" was somewhat of an evasion of Paul's perhaps terse opinion of you not having the right to judge Coulson and Dockinger as unfit to be members of the human race ((6)). As to whether Coulson had a right to pub. the story, of course he had. Coulson sets the standards for which he selects material for YANDRO; he is not restricted by a publisher, advertisers, or social or professional pressure groups. ((7)). He is the sole de-

cidor (maybe his wife offers some comment), but he sets the standards. So we cannot honestly charge Buck with violating any set or binding code. You or I or anyone else may feel it was an unfortunate, uncalled-for, biased, disgusting, choice, but it was his choice and his right as an un-bound (by any code, etc.) fanod to choose it is undeniable.((8)).

Jack, for whatever it is worth, I think the reason you haven't heard from Mike Deckinger is probably because he is sitting home enjoying himself immensely. He is probably delighted and pleased as punch with himself for having caused such a furror and hullaballoo in fandom with one of his stories. And every time dear ole Jack Chalker roams somebody out about the affair or spends page after page of battling and battering it about, it sends Deckinger's ego rating up another 10 points. Your verbal donnybrook in MIRAGE is the most pleasing compliment Deckinger could receive! The worst ego-deflating thing that can happen to a person who has only himself to live with is to receive the lash of being just slightly above being totally ignored. You could have applied that lash by just rambling a little in your editorial about the features in that YANDRO,and then said: "Oh, yes, there was also another of the many poorly written stories by Mike Deckinger." ((9)).

Now I would like to comment at length on Paul Shingleton's letter. One of his remark struck me forcefully, i.e.: "Why should we all believe in the fallacy of some book written supposedly by some idiots 2000 years ago?" I would like to take this caustic statement, and, strangely enough, I would like to start at the end of the statement and work back to the beginning. First, Paul is quite close to the right date in saying "2000 years ago." ((10)). Most people think that Matthew was first written in peine Greek (common Greek) as were the rest of the Christian scriptures, but Matthew's gospel was first written in Hebrew (actually Aramaic, since ancient Hebrew was a "dead language" as far as the common people were concerned). Later Matthew put it into koine Greek, which was the universal language of his day.(Koine Greek held sway from circa 350 B.C. to 350 A.D.). Since Matthew did put the gospel in Hebrew for his fellow Jews, this would indicate a time not too distant from the death of Christ (about 33 A.D.). The best evidence points to not later than 50 A.D. and perhaps as early as 41 A.D.as the original writing of the gosppl (which means "good news") by Matthew. No, no, I'm not going to split hairs and say Paul gives the wrong date for the writing by Matthew. I realize that he meant 2000 years ago in general terms, and he was pretty close...give or take 40 or 50 years. But I make mention of the specific times as merely one link in a chain I am here forging. Bear with me,please.



Next he speaks of the writer of that gospel as "someiidiot." I think Paul will agree that this is an unfortunate choice of words if he reconsiders the matter. Idiots do not speak and write in three languages. Matthew spoke and wrote in Hebrew (Aramaic) and Greek, and undoubtedly had a considerable knowledge of Latin since he was a tax collector for the Roman government (and a government which issued its directives in Latin,the official government language). One has only to read and examine the gospel of Matthew to realize that this man was an educated individual of considerable literary talent. His power and elevation of writing, his feeling for circumstance and conditions, his concern for order, his knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures, his extensive account not only of the teachings of Jesus, but also ministerial activity and ministerial instruction both engaged in and given by Jesus, have caused Biblical and secular scholars alike to accord it great honors. Renan called it "The most important book ever written;" E.J. Goodspeed says

"The gospel of Matthew is a fact of literature, not to be denied, which stood up in antiquity so commandingly that it became the leading book in the Fourfold Gospel and the whole New Testament." "Some idiot?" Some indeed! ((11)).

Now Paul says "supposedly written by..." SUPPOSEDLY? Do you mean to imply that Matthew was not the author of the gospel that bears his name? I wish I had the space to go into this matter of the authenticity of Matthew's authorship in greater detail, but this letter of mine is long enough already. So I can only say that to deny Matthew's authorship is to buck the evidence in such areas as textual criticism, manuscripts,the Greek's Greek's exaltation of authorship, the eclipsing of Mark's gospel ((12)), authors and works in Greek, first person details in the gospel and their characteristics, apostolic ascription in the First Century, and other related matters. If it pleases Paul to add "supposedly" to"written by" I suggest you take a tip from the Boy Scout's motto and "Be Prepared...." to back it up! Now, if Paul considers any part or all of Matthew's gospel to be a "fallacy," that is his view and his responsibility. And he may as a free agent may believe or disbelieve on whatever he chooses. BUT if he intends to defame a BIBLE book like Matthew's, especially with a statement like "some book written supposedly by some idiot," them he is going to run into trouble. That trouble could take the form of people who have spent years in the study of the BIBLE translations, manuscripts, histories, languages, and related secular matters, who might not be as kind as I have been, but rather will literally slaughter him by facts, evidence,scholarship, and knowledge. (Paul, I am not talking down, as it were, to you; I am speaking to you on the same level...I myself learned the lesson -- the hard way.

The next point in Paul's letter is a touchy one, but I am not greatly concerned with its patriotism as I am with its wording. Quote: "Maybe /Chalker/ is too much of a coward or a conformist to defend your country..."((13)).Let's take the example of refusal to serve in the armed forces of a nation (which seems to be the connotation of Paul's charge). A number of religious sects (or "denominations, as you wish) in several nation have suffered mistreatment and imprisonment in war time and peace time for refusal to take part in wars among earthly nations. Can you, Paul, honestly and logically brand a man a coward if in peace-time (little chance of his being killed - so no fear of death) he is willing to suffer humiliation, loss of livelihood, loss of personal freedom, and abuse by imprisonment, rather than pledge himself to the military obedience of an earthly nation, because he sincerely believes it to be an act of disloyalty to both his fellow men and, most especially, to the Highest Power, his God? Did you say "coward" Paul? A man suffers and bears losses and indignity by taking his staunch, unswerving stand (in some nations -- Russia, Nazi Germany, etc.Even suffering torture and death) in opposition to the action followed by the masses of his fellow countrymen. He stands comparatively alone, withstanding pains, threats, and pressures...and you would brand this person a "conformist?"! The masses bow to the power of the Selective Service Act, a relative few refuse....which is the "conformist" Paul? And if you choose to answer,no flag-waving or impassioned speeches on patriotism, please, for I only question your choice of words in this letter.

Well, Jack, you certainly went on to prove that you can get as emotional as he can.. but, of course, there is one main drawback to such procedure, i.e., you can never win an argument that way. It is sad, but true. I am not against turning a phrase cleverly on occassion, but when one lets himself fall prey to the use of the invective, he might do well to consider seriously and honestly the words of Vice-Admiral H.G. Rickover: "The uneducated have no intelligent support for their opinions, and so can not defend them rationally against adversaries who argue on the basis of fact, knowledge, and reason. The uneducated possess but one weapon -- the lash of invective. They can not argue on the level of facts and ideas, so they stoop to personal vilification."

To speak very frankly, Jack, both you and Paul are guilty of doing just that. And it does no good to cry "He started it!" It makes no difference who started it -- the thing that will separate the men from the boys is who stops it and will constrain himself in an argument by relying only on intellect, fact, knowledge, reason, and ideas.

...not invectives of personal vilification. ((14)). Rickover also pointed out that "the truly educated man can admit his mistakes without feeling that his personal worth has been diminished; the uneducated man clings to his mistakes with all the more determination when others point them out. To him the critic is an enemy who attacks him by showing him up."

So we actually work against our own cause when we, by personal vilification, force our opponent into the reaction of the "uneducated man," that being he tenaciously clings to his mistakes because we have made him feel that our opposition to his opinion is an attack on his worth as a person. Ypu and Paul have successfully accomplished one thing -- you have beaten yourselves!

As to the old (oh so aged!) challenge of the atheist that "You can't prove that God exists," I will let a few words from William Blake's AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE suffice:

"He who doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe, do what you please.
If the sun and moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out."

As to the remarks of Avram Davidson about the possible offensiveness of Prossor's use of the Solomon's Seal (or Star of David) and letters of the tetragrammaton(Yod He Waw He = YHWH). I think Avram was not saying that he or practicing Jews in general would be iffended, but simply if a Jew wanted to be offended by the use of such symbols in connection with the idols they could find cause to do so. And since Mr. Davidson is a knowledgeable and practicing Jew, I wonder if he could care to enlighten me on a point of Judaism? What is the origin of the "Star of David?" I don't believe there's any reference to any such symbol in the Hebrew scriptures, is there?

In closing, may I express my admiration for Dave Prossor's letter of explanation of the use of the abovenamed symbols. Dave is an excellent artist of the weird and the macabre, and a gentleman showing reasonableness, a fine sense of human relations and sincerity of his artwork. He should be highly commended for his sincere and tactful h handling of the "possible" objection raised by Mr. Davidson.

And so I bring this long epistle to a close. I remain, Sincerely, Al Andrews.
(Birmingham 9,Ala

:-:

The above was the finest letter of comment I have received to date. It was so good that I printed it almost word-for-word. It covers just about everything worth covering --and as good or better than most. This, combined with the great length of the letter, have made inclusions by others impossible. THIS IS THE TYPE OF LoC THAT WILL BRING FREE MIRs Below are my comments. The Editor

((1))-If they were great, they'd be in prozines. You, the reader, have to do more than pass off stories with a literary shrug. We place them in MIRAGE not only to entertain, but for critical commentary, so that the author can see what the public thinks is wrong and better himself.

((2))-You did. The original manuscripts for MYTHS AND LEGENDS were submitted in poor shape; as fragmentary phrases and in a sloppy, dog-eared fashion. This is one reason it is no longer in MIRAGE -- I had to re-write the pieces almost entirely, and I have not the slightest knowledge of myths and legends.

((3))-Quoting references, Redd Boggs refutes Dodd and Evans and says that Verne never completed it. Dodd is wrong in one respect -- Poe wrote and abandoned PYM 10 years before his death, and it was therefore not his last story. It was abandoned because Poe believed it inferior, and hoped to embroider it into a major novel later -- one which he never wrote. Verne did take it and write an ending; this being done in the late 70s. Dodd's references are correct on the collaborative publication. The Poe-Verne collab. can be obtained for $3.00 through The Fantasy Classic Library,P.O.Box 161,Hicksville,NY.

((4))-My remarks were paradoxical, admittedly, However, I do exercise censorship of items I feel unfit for MIRAGE publication. I would have rejected "Revelation" no matter who or what it attacked, on the grounds that it was objectionable material, and could

have had a damaging influence on the younger part of the readership. At any rate, I think you're splitting hairs. By being paradixical, and demanding my rights under their rules, I believe I successfully illustrated the paradoxes on both sides; and why taking a stand in the manner in which they exhibit their views and enforce them they are themselves committing the error of creating a paradox, since by the letters in MIR4 they obviously can't apply their rules to their own views, and believe themselves excluded from their own laws of no-censorship and freedom of the fannish press.
((5))- Ted Pauls later sent a letter of equal length to follow his published one. In this second, unseen communication he declares that the judicial system we have is lousy and should be overthrown. And substitute what, Ted ? 'Nuff said.
((6))- I've reopnsidered. The human race isn't that much to begin with.... in fact,what they did was very human indeed.
((7))- Pretty lousy standards, in my opinion, though.
((8))- I never meant to deny Dockinger the right to publish his piece. I do think that YANDRO should not have been the place to do it, since it is a family fanzine, going to all ages (including the "formulative age" for shaping their outlook on life), and also being a highly respected and influential publication. If Dockinger wants to be constructive and interesting, then any fanzine -- even MIRAGE -- is open to him. HOWEVER,if his sole object is to fulfill his egotism-desiring mechanism, and is going to be pointless, destructive, and even openly offensive to the masses of people with no respect for his fellow men, then I believe that HE SHOULD PUBLISH AND DISTRIBUTE IT HIMSELF. In this way he will not involve others, if nothing else. And he'll show himself, and himself alone, for what he really is. Personally, I think he's scared to do it that way
((9))-Admittedly it would have been more effective as a person-to-person battle, rather than a public one, but it would not have stirred anything up. It would not have brought in half the responses, given us half the publicity, nor raised any issues of importance For those reasons the editorial was written as it was. My opinion was true; my method of saying it was for the purpose of deliberate instigation. Dedkinger recently told me that he plans a sequel -- and freely admitted that he wanted publicity more than anything else. He will, if he writes it, get no mention by name in MIRAGE. I might, however, if I have the time, write a dissection of the story or an essay on the egotistical mind, if I can find someplace other than MIRAGE to publish it.
((10))-This, of course excludes the Old Testament, which is about 4000 years old.
((11))-But doesn't your earlier description of Dockinger also apply to Shingleton? You yourself said that atheists were traditionally bullheaded egotists. They accept, as you know, only the facts -- even documented facts -- that support their case. No matter how well backed up, the average party-line atheist will reject any data not distinctly favorable to his cause. If he reads your letter at all, he will probably denounce it as lies and propaganda. You know that yourself. Slam vs. slam may not win anything, but intelligence vs. egotism sees both sides as thinking themselves the winner.Which is worse
((12))-Paul never confined his remarks to criticising Matthew. He was referring to the entire BIBLE, I think.
((13))-(Excerpt from a speech of Gen. Shoup, Commandant, United States Marine Corps., May, 1960: "Atheists are traditionally cowards. They can not stand up under pressure; they crack very easily and much quicker than any other type of individual. They insist on being individuals when a team effort is the only way a company can come out alive. They insist on being a member of the group when they, as individuals, are obnoxious to their fellows. They are walking, talking beings who are mentally forced to do the opposite of what they should. 87% of all the traitors that the armed services saw during the Korean Conflict were known atheists. I concur with the statement of the Joint Chief of Staff of last June 16 /1959/ that, if there was some certain way to tell who was an atheist and who was not, we would exclude all of them from the armed services."
((14))-I freely admit that I erred in my method of reply to Shingleton's letter. If I has it to do again, I would do it much differently. I don't know now why I did as I did I lost my temper when I was critiqised for criticising others. However, I have the consolation that, without my outburst, you would have never written your excellent letter.

...J.L.C.

If you have a book which would be of interest to the fantasy fans that you particularly like or dislike and wish to review, THE BOOKSHELF welcomes such pieces. Reviews submitted should be brief and to the point. Complete information on the book -- title, author, publisher, year of publication, price -- should be included.



On hand is a review copy of Maurice B. Gardner's BANTAN INCREDIBLE (Meador Press,Boston, 1960..$3.00. Illustrated by Dave Prosser). This book is one of a series of novels going back to the late 30s, and with which I am thoroughly unfamiliar. Unfortunately, the books are written as subplots in a much broader, major theme which is kept relitively obscure from the beginning reader with an almost "Well, you know what happened before, so..." attitude. Bantan is the well known South Sea Islands counterpart of Tarzan, with much the same background, physical appearance, and abilities (although Bantan is not gifted with the ability to communicate with animals -- he was raised by natives, not apes). In BANTAN INCREDIBLE, Mr. Gardner leans towards science fiction, something Burroughs didn't do in his jungle tales, preferring separate books for his stf, and presents in this plot/subplot the tale of an island bound by ritual and fear to a white "god" scientist, who, following the promise of reincarnation, has invented a device which will break the barriers and reveal the memories of a person's past lives Captured by the islanders when Bantan lands on their island searching for an indistinct enemy from past books, he is brought before the scientist. Bantan then becomes the first white subject of the machine. It is here that Mr. Gardner comes into his own with his unusually poetic writing style, and we are shown in full detail many of our hero's past incarnations in vignette form, which is well handled. For Mr. Gardner has without doubt a supurb writing skill, and an ability to weave a colorful picture so real that the reader can almost taste it. However, this great literary gift is also his downfall, since the author preoccupies himself so much in setting the mood and painting the setting unto the Nth detail that the reader finds himself becoming disinterested. In creating a true mood and background, Gardner looses sight of the plot itself -- and while he could easily write a story of pure mood, he makes it clear that plot is ever present by placing Bantan -- or a character such as Bantan -- in peril in the first place. The descriptive talent he has is close to the mood stories of a Lovecraft or Smith or Poe -- but he lacks the skill to properly present them. For in those others writings, plot may be set aside, but it is never forgotten! This is Gardner's fatal flaw -- sacrificing continuity and plot values for mood and settings -- which makes not only BANTAN INCREDIBLE but also, I'll wager, any other writings of his fall way short of the mark. Gardner certainly has literary talent, and it is to be regretted that, instead of developing, he has been satisfied with the publisher's contracts and convinced himself that Bantan is the best he can do. In my opinion, Burroughs sacrificed mood and setting techniques for those of plot and continuity -- which made his tales readable, although not very enjoyable. Gardner does the reverse and comes out with the same ends -- he sacrifices the plotting and continuity techniques in favor of mood and setting....and comes out with a just barely readable book, and not wholly enjoyable. To be blunt, after a while the reader issues a bored sigh and places the book down -- he just doesn't give a damn any more. One shudders to think, though,what

would have happened had ERB and Maurice Gardner combined their opposite talents --it would have rocked the world of fantastic literature. It is to be regretted that their development of their own skills ran only halfway to perfection... we are left with one-half of a great writer apiece.
The Prosser illustrations do little or nothing for the book, I fear. Dave is at his best when given a free hand; he suffers here from being restricted to a subject that can not allow him to make full use of his imagination or his talents -- and, most of all, from poor reproduction which, I know, cut a tremendous amount of the characteristic Prosser detail.
SUMMING UP: This reader liked Gardner as a whole, but, never having been a Burroughs fanatic, hates Tarzan and Tarzan imitations. Some of the scenes are very memorable, but, as a whole, over-attention to color and mood at the loss of plot and continuity take a vital something from it. ***An almost-good book reviewed by a hostile critic*** May appeal to Tarzan fans -- I don't like Burroughs, either, remember.....JLC

INDEX TO THE VERSE IN WEIRD TALES, Including ORIENTAL STORIES and THE MAGIC CARPET MAGAZINE and THE THRILL BOOK is the lengthy title for a small but very valuable and well-produced bibliographical item of interest to all fantasy collectors. It is exactly what the title says it is -- a meticulous listing of all of the verse published in the abovementioned magazines from start (V.1 #1) to the last issue. A scholarly treatment is given each by listing each poem by magazine, by the title of the poem, and by the author(s). T.G.L. Cockcroft, the compiler, is certainly to be complimented on giving us this most valuable listing. Well-produced, half-size, double-columned, with a "slick" cover that wears well. Certainly worth many times 75¢ to the fantasy fan; 500 copy edition, printed by Cockcroft in New Zealand. ** It has been some time since this item came in, and, on writing, I find that the U.S. agent's address is not in my files, as I had supposed when loaning the item out. However, I will write Mr. Cockcroft just as soon as I get this 'zine in the mail, and will refer your individual orders to the appropriate source if you make them through MIRAGE. My apologies.

I wish to take this space to make note of several items of interest on the calendar FIRST, is, of course, the Chicon III. It's about 90-10 against my being there, but I have sent in my $2 and urge you to do the same. These things need financing, and, I think that any true fan should join -- particularly if he's not going to be there, since your money pays for the Hugos and keeps the cons rolling from year to year. So, send $2.00 (if you haven't already) to: George W. Price, P.O. Box 4864, Chicago 80, Illinois. AND....It's D.C. in '63, of course.

John Vetter, who runs Kadath Books out of 1410 Turkey Run Road, McLean, Virginia (Lovecraftiana exclusively) is all fired up by the biblio craze; elsewhere in this issue you will find his INDEX TO VERSES IN TRIBUTE TO H.P.L. and in MIR6 the first BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ARTISTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS ACCOMPANYING H.P.L.'s PUBLISHED MATERIAL. Also in MIR6 -- an additions & corrections list for the H.P.L. BIBLIO Anthem did last March. MIRAGE WILL GO QUARTERLY in 1963. The editor will be attending classes then at The University of Baltimore, with luck, but we hope to have a staff for such sundry chores as typing stencil, etc. to give us more time.
Out very soon will be MIRAGE ON LOVECRAFT, edited by Jack L. Chalker. Published by Alan Dodd in Great Britain, this features a new Prosser cover, interiors by divers people, and, aside from the two MIRAGE articles on Lovecraft -- Keller's NOTES ON L. and Derleth's rebuttal, there is also the rare Lovecraft AUTOBIOGRAPHY: SOME NOTES ON A NONENTITY. Plus.... THE WHITE SHIP, a story by HPL. 50¢ if you are a MIR subber; $1 otherwise.
Also: A FIGMENT OF A DREAM, by David H. Keller. A first edition of Keller's newest and best piece of major fantasy writing. With heavy paper covers and loads of Prosser illustrations; a great piece of work, destined to become very valuable. ALL COPIES SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR AND NUMBERED. A collector's item! $2.00 while they last.....

ON THE REASONS FOR A 5th-ISSUE SEMI-ANNISH AND WHY MANY OF YOU WON'T BE WITH US ANY MORE....

CHOP

CHOP

IS THERE A STAR IN THIS BOX?



SEE BELOW IF THERE IS...

MIRAGE is getting much too expensive. The loss is now more than $30 an issue, and I really don't have that much to spare. So far, you've paid the price by bearing with us over long spans of time -- as much as nine months -- between issues because your editor couldn't afford to bring the issue out.

MIRAGE #5 is a sort of apology -- it is extra-long, so that it's almost like two issues.... we hope that the quality of our material and the bulk of this issue makes the long wait worthwhile...

Since we plan to go quarterly, you can expect two things: (1) -- a cut in the page count...back down to between 24 and 34 pages, although the material will still be the same as far as quality, usefulness, and entertainment goes. And, (2) -- worst of all, we'll have to cut a great many people off our mailing list.

IF YOU ARE A SUBSCRIBER: Check the mailing label on the envelope in which MIRAGE #5 arrived. There should be a number beside your name -- #6, #7, #8, etc. This is the issue of MIRAGE with which your subscription expires. If it is getting close to expiration, we recommend that you renew right now. You are the ones who keep MIR in business!

IF YOU ARE A TRADER: There should be a letter "T" beside your name on your mailing label. If it is there, then you are O.K. -- just keep sending your fanzines. I know we seldom comment upon them, but this is due to a lack of time; not a lack of enjoyment. If there is NO "T" aside from your name, and you are a fanzd, please send your 'zine(s). Only apazines are ineligible, except those with outstanding contents or that are of great interest to the non-apaian. Examples of those apazines which can trade are: VIPER, WARHOON, and the like.

IF YOU ARE A CONTRIBUTOR: The issue in which your piece appears is the only issue you can receive for nothing. Two copies of that issue will be sent, if requested.

IF, AFTER YOUR NAME, YOU HAVE A "C": This is your last issue unless you do something.
IF, AFTER YOUR NAME, YOU HAVE A "CI": You are assured of receiving the next issue as well for some reason...but watch those initials lest the "I" drop off!

DO YOU HAVE A STAR? Look above, in that box. IF THERE IS NO STAR, YOU ARE O.K. AND WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE MIRAGE. IF THE BOX IS VACANT, YOU ARE ALL RIGHT. However, IF THERE IS A STAR THERE, YOU'D BETTER DO SOMETHING------AND FAST! A STAR MEANS THAT THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE.

We realize that we must cut some valued and old friends -- but, despite friendships, I must do this in order to keep MIRAGE from indefinitely folding. SO, PRESERVE YOUR FRIENDSHIP -- subscribe, contribute, or trade publications (all-for-all or page-for-page).

Thank you, and see you again about late October....we hope.

The Ahthon Press
Jack L. Chalker